# Huddersfield Local History Society

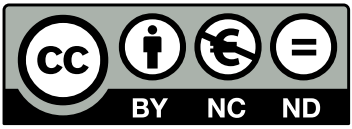
**Huddersfield Local History Society**
huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

Journal No. 30
2019/2020

The articles contained within this PDF document remain the copyright of the original authors (or their estates) and may not be reproduced further without their express permission. This PDF file remains the copyright of the Society.

You are free to share this PDF document under the following conditions:

1. You may not sell the document or in any other way benefit financially from sharing it
2. You may not disassemble or otherwise alter the document in any way (including the removal of this cover sheet)
3. If you make the file available on a web site or share it via an email, you should include a link to the Society's web site



Huddersfield Local History Society

# Journal

2019 / 2020

Issue 30

**HUDDERSFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY** was formed in 1977. It was established to create a means by which peoples of all levels of experience could share their common interests in the history of Huddersfield and district. We recognise that Huddersfield enjoys a rich heritage. It is the home town of prime ministers and Hollywood stars; the birthplace of Rugby League and famous Olympic athletes; it has more buildings than Bath listed for historical or architectural interest; it had the first municipal trams and some of the first council housing; its radical heritage includes the Luddites, suffragettes, pacifists and other campaigners for change.

**MEMBERSHIP** of the Society runs from 1 September until 31 August and the present subscriptions (2019/20) per year are:

**Individual membership £10**

**Double membership £15**

**Group membership £15**

Double membership consists of two named persons using a single address and receiving one copy of the Society's *Journal*. Cheques should be made payable to *Huddersfield Local History Society* and sent to the Membership Secretary (address inside back cover) or submitted at a Society meeting. Payment by annual Standing Order is encouraged and a form may be downloaded from our website, which also allows online payment.

**MEETINGS**: The Society organises a full programme of meetings each year and the programme for 2018/19 is published in this *Journal* (page 6). Our Monday evening meetings commence at 7.30pm. Visitors are welcome at a charge of £2 per meeting.

**PUBLICATIONS**: The Huddersfield Local History Society *Journal* is produced on an annual basis, free to members and at a cost of £4.00 to non-members. In addition, the Society publishes books which are listed separately in this Journal (pages 7-8), together with details of prices and how they may be purchased.

**Front and Back Cover Photos** © Andy Hemingway (Castle Hill at Sunset, Buckstones and Pule Hill); © Dave Pattern (Cloth Hall Tower and Ravensknowle Park with Tolson Museum); © Kirklees Image Archive (Lockwood Viaduct and Huddersfield c. 1960); © Chris Marsden (Lockwood Viaduct).

**HUDDERSFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY**

# JOURNAL

**2019/20** **Issue 30**

The Brown Cow Inn, Kirkheaton, in 1928. Photo by W. H. Sikes.
Courtesy of Kirklees Museums & Galleries

**Would you like to submit an article for inclusion in the Journal?**
The Society welcomes photographs, letters, original articles, diary extracts, and other research items no longer than 3,000 words on any aspects of local history.

Please send items for publication to the editor at: editor@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk.
The deadline for submission of copy for the 2020/21 Journal, Issue 29, will be **Friday, 1 March 2020**.

A style guide is available for Members wishing to produce articles and the Society offers help for those less confident in using a computer. The style guide can be found on the Society's website www.huddersfieldhistory.org.uk.

Published by Huddersfield Local History Society
www.huddersfieldhistory.org.uk

Printed by Charlesworth Press
Flanshaw Way, Wakefield WF2 9LP, UK
www.charlesworth.com

ISSN 2049-8403

**© Huddersfield Local History Society 2019**

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed, or transmitted in any form or by any means, including photocopying, recording, or other electronic or mechanical methods, without the prior written permission of the Editor.

The content of this publication does not reflect the official opinion of the Huddersfield Local History Society. Responsibility for the information and views expressed in the *Huddersfield Local History Society Journal* therein lies entirely with the author(s).

# CONTENTS

**EDITORIAL**
Robert Piggott....4
**NEWS AND EVENTS**
The Society's Programme of Events, 2019-2020 ....6
The Society's Publications ....7
Edward Law History Prize
**Frank Grombir**....9
Discover Huddersfield Update
**David Griffiths** ....10
Kirklees Heritage Forum
**Bill Roberts**....11
**ARTICLES**
Changing Farming Communities around Huddersfield 1841 - 1910
**Don Jones and Jo Stanley** ....12
Five Generations of Mitchell Millwrights in the Holme Valley and Beyond
**Sheila Grove** ....23
Station 312 Reporting
**Cheryl and Matthew Toomey**....33
The Huddersfield Cockney
**Chris Dixon** ....39
W. H. Sikes Photographer of Historic Huddersfield
**Peter Burton**....47
Emily Frances Siddon
**Peter Marshall**....55
Notable Co-operator - Thomas Hirst 1792-1833
**John Halstead**....61
Piecing together the story of Brothers
**Christine Piper**....68
Pity the Victorian Teacher
**Ros Whittaker** ....76
Samuel Sharpe and Peter MacOwen of Huddersfield College
**Myra D. Kavanagh** ....82
Cyprus: A Forgotten War
**Les Smith**....87

**BOOK REVIEWS**
Christine Verguson....89

**OBITUARIES**....92

## EDITORIAL

Dear reader,

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this year's edition of the journal which is packed with wonderful articles about Huddersfield and the wider area. This is my first time editing the journal, and I have enjoyed putting it together and reading so many interesting pieces.

I take particular satisfaction in being able to present to you the work of Don Jones, who was editor of the first newsletter put together by the Society back in 1983. His article, co-authored with Jo Stanley, who did much of the heavy lifting, concerns the changing face of farming in the area in the nineteenth century. As you can see from our events schedule, which follows this editorial, Jo will be speaking on a similar subject as part of next year's season of talks. With Don, she has produced a work which is replete with detail about the social history of farming and the many ways farmers have diversified to make ends meet. The second part will follow in the next edition of this journal and brings the story up to the present day.

In the previous edition, the outgoing editor, Frank Grombir wrote of 'history written by the people for the people' and I would like this to continue to be the overriding theme of the journal. It is hopefully of the people too, and illustrative of life beyond the elites. Although, as you will see, there are a few articles on local notables included in these pages, such as Peter Marshall's on Emily Francis Siddon, who sat on the Board of Guardians, and Peter Burton's on W. H. Sikes, a retired cashmere manufacturer, these individuals were also at the flashpoint of social change. This manifested itself in different ways - in the case of Siddon, in supporting the protection of children and rights for women; and in the case of Sikes, in photographing the old buildings of the area before their demolition. They are both deservedly applauded here, either for leading the way or for helping us understand where we have come from.

Change is of course one of history's major concerns. Perhaps none of the articles better illustrates the theme of individuals getting to grips with social and technological change than Sheila Grove's work on her Mitchell millwright forebears. As Sheila shows, successive generations of specialist technicians – millwrights -both adapted to the use of new technologies and contributed to their development.

Sheila's article is also one of two included here which bear the imprint of the venerable Alan Brooke. As well as providing an afterword to Sheila's article, and championing her work in general, Alan was instrumental in the rescue and restoration of the gravestone of a founder member of the Huddersfield Co-operative Trading Association, Thomas Hirst. As John Halstead relates in his article which concerns both Hirst and the restoration, Hirst was a key figure in the history of the co-operative movement, associate of Robert Owen, and further evidence, if any were needed, of the connection between non-conformity and radical politics, and Huddersfield's strong history of both.

Our understanding of change of a different kind was facilitated by the work of the subject of Cheryl and Matthew Toomey's article. S. Morris Bower, whose amateur interest in thunderstorms as a teenager transformed his life, set up a reporting system that would allow changes in the weather to be discerned. Cheryl and Matthew's fascinating article, spurred on by the discovery of a cache of postcards outlines the ways in which Bower crowdsourced meteorological data from a team of volunteers nationwide, accumulating a record of thunderstorm activity.

Also included in this issue is Chris Dixon's article on Conscientious Objector, William Dixon, socialist opponent to the First World War. In this year of the anniversary of the Treaty of Versailles and the difficult peace that followed the war for those lucky enough to survive it, it seems fitting to remember someone who steadfastly opposed the conflict. Dixon was rightly sceptical that the war would bring anything of value to the ordinary person and was willing to endure imprisonment to make this stand.

Space limits the detailed discussion of the other pieces included here. However, Christine Piper has contributed another fine article on her extended family, which continues the story of the Croslands from the previous issue. In addition, two articles on education in nineteenth century Huddersfield have been supplied by Ros Whittaker and Myra Kavanagh which illuminate both the social conditions and the individuals involved. These are followed by an appeal from Les Smith who is searching for the families of service personnel involved in the conflict in Cyprus.

Although this is the 30th issue of the journal, it is next year that marks the 30-year anniversary of this publication. Although this should be the cause of some celebration, it is with regret that this issue should follow the loss of two stalwart members of the society, George Redmonds and Hilary Haigh. As Cyril's tributes at the close of this edition make clear, their contributions to local history were immense and their loss is keenly felt. However, it is hoped that the ongoing strength of this journal is offers testament to their work.

Robert Piggott, Editor

Huddersfield Local History Society

## PROGRAMME OF EVENTS, 2019-2020

**30 September 2019** **Chris Marsden**

*Huddersfield in 50 Buildings? Really?*

**October 2019** **AGM** **Heather Norris Nicholson**

*Not simply children, dogs and tea cups: exploring the cine film legacy of Lucy Fairbank and other Yorkshire women filmmakers*

**23 November 2019** **Study Day**

*Language, people and places: a tribute to Dr Redmonds, his life and work*

**25 November 2019** **Dave Russell**

*Nights out in 1960s Yorkshire. Cabaret, Glamour and Casinos*

**27 January 2020** **John Rumsby**

*'The Boys of the Old Brigade': the early history of the Huddersfield & District Army Veterans' Association*

**24 February 2020** **Jo Stanley**

*Your Kirklees pinta? Changes in local dairy farming 1850-2020*

**30 March 2020** **Huddersfield Thespians**

*'The play must go on' – 100 years of the Huddersfield Thespians*

**27 April 2020** **LUDDITE MEMORIAL LECTURE** **TBC**

**18 May 2020** **Alice Brumby**

*Telling Their Stories: 'Shell-Shocked' Ex-servicemen in Storthes Hall Mental Hospital, 1924- 1931.*

## THE ANNIVERSARIES KEEP COMING!

Some years ago, the Society took the initiative to ensure that two major anniversaries did not go unnoticed – the 150th anniversary of Huddersfield Borough, established in 1868, and the Corporation's purchase of the Ramsden estate in 1920, for £1.3 million.

The first of these is now behind us. Our specific contribution was the publication of the book *Making up for Lost Time: The Pioneering years of Huddersfield Corporation* (see p.7). Working with other partners, this was complemented by:

* The rediscovery and restoration, by W. Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS), of the original Borough Charter. This was exhibited twice at the Town Hall – for Heritage Open Days in September and a Council meeting in October – and can now be seen at WYAS (Kirklees) by appointment.

* A new self-guided 'Civic Celebration Trail', published by Discover Huddersfield, plus a guided walk and Town Hall tours.

* An exhibition at Heritage Quay, launched with the book and trail in July and running on into the autumn.

* Drama workshops with primary schools on the theme of local democracy, with performances at the Town Hall in November attended by the Mayor and other Councillors.

For next year's celebration of 'the town that bought itself', a 'Huddersfield 2020' group of partners is working towards a similar programme of events. This will certainly include publication by the University Press of a volume of essays, *Power in the Land: the Ramsdens in Huddersfield, 1531-1920* commissioned by the Society. Our member Professor Edward Royle, of York University, has stepped in as editor in place of the late Hilary Haigh, and publication is scheduled for the centenary date in September 2020. Although it is early days, other ideas already in play include:

* A refresh of the permanent 'Ramsden Town' gallery at the Tolson Museum.

* A local travelling exhibition (with input from University History students).

* Further drama work with schools.

* Republication, probably online, of Alderman Clifford Stephenson's 1972 booklet 'The Town that bought itself' (an initiative from Huddersfield Civic Society).

Watch out for detailed announcements in due course.

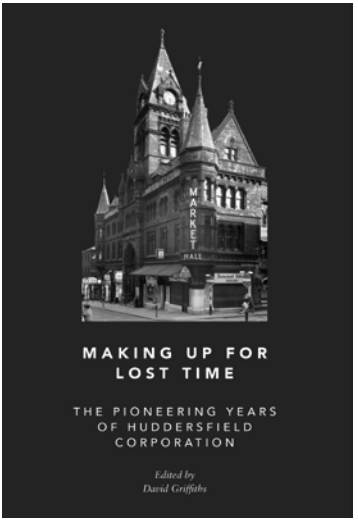
David Griffiths

## The LATEST HLHS PUBLICATIONS

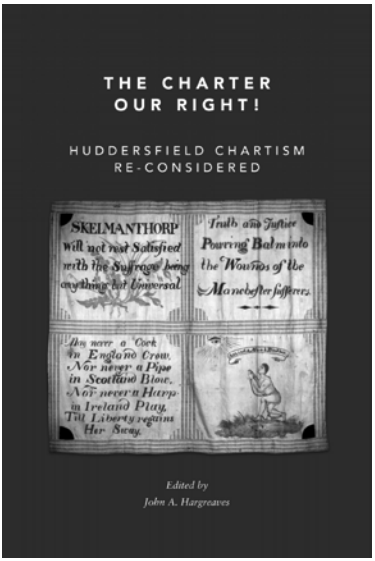
As well as our annual *Journal*, the Society has a range of booklets in print, as follows:

***Making Up for Lost Time: The Pioneering Years of Huddersfield Corporation***,
edited by David Griffiths
(ISBN 9780992984113)

£8.95 plus postage and packing




---

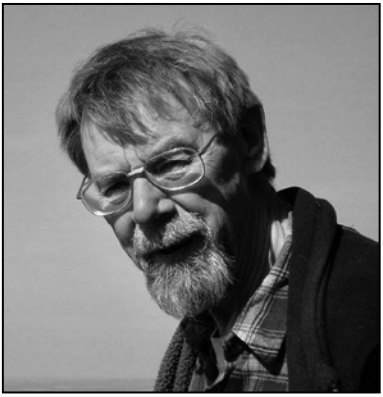

THE CHARTER OUR RIGHT!
HUDDERSFIELD CHARTISM RE-CONSIDERED
SKELMANTHORP
Will not rest Satisfied with the Suffrage being anything but Universal.
Truth and Justice Pouring Balm into the Wounds of the Manchester Sufferers.
Edited by John A. Hargreaves

***The Charter Our Right! Huddersfield Chartism Re-Considered,***
edited by John A. Hargreaves
(ISBN 9780992984106)

£9.95 plus postage and packing

## EDWARD LAW HISTORY PRIZE

The Edward Law History Prize was set up in 2017 by Huddersfield Local History Society in recognition of our member and prolific local historian, Edward Law, who died in 2013.



**Edward Law (1945 - 2013)**

The Society is convinced there is a great talent and enthusiasm for the history of the place and its people. This modest competition, open to all ages, and in partnership with the University of Huddersfield, West Yorkshire Branch of the Historical Association, Huddersfield Exposed and Kirklees Libraries, is about tapping into that talent, recognising it and sharing it more widely.

As you may know, Pam Brooke, winner of the prize last year has been doubly successful, winning the British Association for Local History Publications and Research Award 2019 for her Edward Law History Prize winning essay 'Death on the Home Front'.

If you would like to enter the 2020 competition, please forward your expression of interest to the Society's publicity officer at: info@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk. The closing date for entries is Friday, 31 January 2020.

The competition is open to anyone who has not previously published any historical research. There are two categories with the long-essay prize for submissions of 2500 to 3000 words having the chance to win £150, and the short-essay prize for submissions of 500-800 words eligible for £50 reward.

Please spread the word about this new initiative and keep an eye on the Society's website and other publicity material for more details

Frank Grombir

HUDDERSFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

Kirklees Libraries.

University of HUDDERSFIELD Inspiring tomorrow's professionals

Huddersfield Exposed

The Historical Association The voice for history

## DISCOVER HUDDERSFIELD UPDATE

Huddersfield Local History Society (HLHS) continues to play an active part in two significant partnerships celebrating local heritage.

Discover Huddersfield (DH) published new Building Stones and University Campus trails over the last year, bringing the range of printed town trails to over a dozen. In the pipeline for this year are two more, on civic heritage to mark the Borough's 150 years (see p. 7) and on Lindley, both contributed by HLHS members. Numbers attending the guided walks programme continued to grow and, once again, 16 walks are scheduled for the current season, including eight new ones. The walks brochure and the printed trails are widely available across the town and at www.discoverhuddersfield.com

Meanwhile the joint HLHS/Huddersfield Civic Society (HCS) initiative some years ago to revitalise Heritage Open Days (HODs) locally has now spawned the Kirklees Heritage Open Days Committee (which I chair), involving the Holme Valley and Spen Valley civic societies as well as established Huddersfield partners. Last year 60 events were organised across the Borough, which should at least be equalled this year. So popular has the national festival become that it will now extend across two 'weekends', September 6-9 and 13-16. The local brochure should be out, and the national website (www.heritageopendays.org.uk) open for bookings where necessary, from about 15 August. Free (but bookable) DH walks for HODs will cover Women's Suffrage, Historic Almondbury and 'Exploding Huddersfield'!

Meanwhile funds are still available for further development of the joint HCS/HLHS Town Centre Heritage Trail, to supplement the printed leaflets and information boards. Proposals have now been developed for a 'web app' providing heritage content to smartphone users around the town centre, which will hopefully come to fruition in the year ahead.

The expanded DH walks programme is always in need of volunteers to support the walk leaders, collect money, ensure nobody gets lost, and so forth – and perhaps in due course to lead walks themselves. Anybody interested in helping is welcome to make contact with the volunteer co-ordinator, Maureen Mitchell, via info@dicoverhuddersfield.com.

David Griffiths, HLHS rep to Discover Huddersfield

## KIRKLEES HERITAGE FORUM

Kirklees Heritage Forum is an informal body which aims to list what has been written about the minority ethnic and religious groups which have resided or settled in Kirklees and to encourage further research and writing about their histories. An audit of what has been done so far can be found on the Migrations page on the Society's website, www.huddersfieldhistory.org.uk.

Huddersfield Local History Society continues to encourage the objectives of the Forum. The 2018/2019 Journal contained an article by Joe Hopkinson, a PhD student at Huddersfield University. This was entitled 'Dispersal Bussing in Huddersfield during the 1960s and 1970s.' This traced the discriminatory policy adopted by Huddersfield Local Education Committee, and ten other authorities as a response to migration in the mid-1960s. This article was a follow-up to Joe's film 'Dispersing the Problem: Immigrant Children in Huddersfield in the 1960s and 1970s' which won the Royal Historical Society's prestigious Postgraduate Student Public History Prize.

Two other interesting events have occurred this year. On 17 September the Holocaust Exhibition and Learning Centre, developed by the University of Huddersfield and the Holocaust Survivors' Friendship Association, was opened on the University campus in the Schwann Building adjacent to Heritage Quay. This is one of only two such centres in the UK and will primarily serve the north of England. The Centre, admission to which is free, displays some remarkable and moving items relating to the Holocaust. For opening hours and more information go to: http://holocaustlearning.org/about-helc.

On 29 September, a commemorative event to celebrate 70 years of the arrival of the Windrush and the founding of the NHS took place in Huddersfield Town Hall. A wide variety of events illustrated aspects of the development of the African-Caribbean community in this area, and the early years of the National Health Service. Huddersfield Local History Society took a stall to exhibit its activities and publications. The pages from the Migrations site were displayed to emphasise the Society's continued interest in the history of the local African-Caribbean community.

These additions to the record are very encouraging. However, there is still much to be done to identify and preserve the records of the various groups which have made their homes in this area. Many of the first arrivals have now passed away; and their memories and their records are being lost. Now it is time to look at the achievements of their descendants. Anyone interested in supporting the objectives of the Forum please contact Bill Roberts at bill@roberts04.plus.com.

Bill Roberts, HLHS rep to Kirklees Heritage Forum

# CHANGING FARMING COMMUNITIES AROUND HUDDERSFIELD, 1841 -1910[1]

## Dr Don Jones and Dr Jo Stanley

Anyone googling 'Broadfield Farm, Tanner's Lane, Slaithwaite HD7 5UD' in 2017 would have immediately found the estate agent's description of what was once Edmund Shaw's old cow shed. It was on sale in 2017 for a quarter of million pounds. Renamed 'The Mistal' (a specifically northern word, derived from 'place of mixed stalls') it was a 'stunning Grade II-listed conversion'.[2] It is one of the cluster of what Bramleys labelled as six 'sympathetically converted' late seventeenth-century dwellings. Among the chic and harmonious dwellings were once Mr Shaw's tannery premises of 1838. The community now been totally transformed into truly beautiful dwellings, inside and out. It is cow-less and no-one farms there.

'Small family farms "will be gone in 30 years"' a *Times* heading proclaimed that year. It was summarising a report by the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England, which asserted that such disappearances of the small family farm would radically change the character and appearance of the countryside nationwide.[3] Here and now in the Colne and Holme Valleys this radical transformation is already happening. The urban fringes feature many modern uses of farm buildings. For the last thirty years, Peter and Gillian Mellor's family have been operating Westfield Farm as Wood Nook equestrian arena and livery stables. This change to an old farm enables villagers to sit at home remote-working globally while their horses are kept in good shape elsewhere. Facebook users can post pictures of their steeds performing in one of two smart indoor arenas that have little in common with old barns.

What is now Honley Boarding Kennels in Scotgate Road was in 1861 Edward Jillot's 9.5 acre Clitheroe Farm, which was partly a hand-loom weaving manufactory. His seven-strong family worked it as wool weavers because they couldn't make enough from farming to survive. His son John was wool slubber and Jacob a cloth dresser. Hinchcliffes, Bolster Moor, Thorncliffe, and Villa Farmshops feed the local populace with foods that their original farm sites could never have produced. Bed and Breakfast is offered by local farms such as Cherry Clough and Coddys, Haddon and Rising Sun, Water House, White House and Windy Harbour. Using premises including its 320-year-old listed barn Uppergate Farm even offers sauna, indoor pool and an 'unforgettable romantic break' in a glamping yurt in a conservation village.

[1] The authors wish to thank John S Fletcher and Julie Middleton at Broadfield, and Celia Gledhill and Barry Rhodes, formerly at Stirley, for all their generosity in helping figure out this story.

[2] Bramleys Sales particulars, Retrieved from: media.onthemarket.com/properties/2731131/doc_0_2.pdf on 12/7/2019.

[3] Jerome Starkey, 'Small family farms 'will be gone in 30 years'', *Times*, 9 August 2017.

Local farm buildings are conserved and re-purposed. But farming as a local occupation is almost gone. In 1851 there were 2,149 farmers and agricultural labourers.[4] Today only a handful exist, and many make a living by having two or more roles in micro-commerce, just as Edward Jillot did 150 years ago.

This article on the nineteenth century, plus the article in the next issue, on the twentieth century up to today, trace the changes in the huge picture of Holme and Colne Valley small family farms over 170 years. Patterns can be discerned by looking at the individual stories of two farms and families. One is Edmund Shaw and his successors at Broadfield Farm within the Broadfields hamlet off Varley Road at Lingards, near Slaithwaite. The other is the Gledhill family at Stirley Farm in Almondbury, near Castle Hill. It's now a community farm offering a range of educational opportunities especially for new generations who are disconnected from farming.

Edmund Shaw's former home, Broadfield, Lingards. Aerial view from 1970s. Picture courtesy of John Fletcher.

[4] Details of 24 relevant townships in 1851, Census of England and Wales Occupational Tables.

Building work gets underway at what was once the Gledhill family's farm: Stirley Farm, Almondbury, 2015, Photo by Don Jones

**Farming history in the two valleys, to 1840– 1901**

A book could easily be written about farming in each of Huddersfield's many townships. Instead, lack of space means the authors reveal a history of just two areas, Almondbury and Lingards, contextualised in a brief over-all history.[5] The two areas aren't necessarily typical of two different trends, but simply indicators of tendencies, chosen because of the unusually substantial evidence available.

Farming history in the Holme and Colne Valley area is unlike that of Britain's prosperous 'estate farms'. These were clusters of farm labouring families who supported the local manor house near which they lived, like dynastic medieval households. In the Yorkshire Ridings such hierarchical estate farms could be found to the east of Huddersfield, the Denby Dale area. They were more typical of the East Riding with its richer soil.

Huddersfield and environs' farming history is largely about tenants surviving poverty – just. Family members living here might have several other jobs, both away and on-site. Arable farming was not common. This is largely because the acid soil and hills were not conducive to crop-growing. However, many farms were able to grow enough hay to feed their cows in winter, whereas now farms buy in such animal feed.

[5] A useful earlier history of agricultural life nationwide can be found in Louis W Moffat, *England on the Eve of the Industrial revolution*, Frank Cass, London, 1963, especially pp. 69-127.

The polythene-wrapped giant cylinders decorating the fields attest to this new trend. Size-wise there was no typical farm. Five to fifteen acres was common. Smaller farms had no additional labourer; the family did almost all the work. On the farms that did have paid help, labourers lived nearby with their nuclear family in a cottage. The people farming each farm changed frequently. Usually rented, not owned, local farms were not necessarily handed on from grandfather to father to son, as might have been expected. Relatives, including sons-in-law, might take over and not report it to the owners (usually the Dartmouth Estate in the Slaithwaite area and the Ramsden Estate in more central Huddersfield).

Broadfield Farm was handed down the female line for four generations. The main house, which seems to have been called Bark Hill and later Lingards House, was built in 1696. It was rather grand, U-shaped with eighteen rooms, two barns, a cowhouse and outbuildings. In the period between 1822-2003 Broadfield itself changed hands – to some degree – about once every twenty-to-thirty years. The longest settled period that is known was 1857-1917. This is when woollen manufacture Nathan Sutcliffe and his family were there. Edmund Shaw had gone but Sarah Anne, one of his grand-daughters, had brought her new husband, Nathan Sutcliffe, into the community. To accommodate new members the main house was divided and extended.

Stirley too changed proprietors five times in this period. It is hard to tell how many farmers there were because, in any area, numbers of farmers are slightly greater than the number of farms. Some farms were jointly farmed, often by brothers. For example, Farnley Tyas had 41 farmers in 1841, which may have meant there were actually about 35 farms.

**The 1840s, when manufacturing overtook agriculture**

For 'Edmund Shaw, gent' the micro-community in the tiny township of Lingards was part of his mixed rural businesses. In 1840 he ran both a leather tanning yard and a farm, of an unknown number of acres. It appears that bark from the oaks in the area had been used in the tanning process earlier in the century. However, the tanning pits were filled in by 1850 and today there's a lawn there. The farm also had one of the area's many small quarries of millstone grit, like Shroggs and Sally Bank, just across the lane.[6]

[6] Dorothy Beaumont, *The Dartmouth Estate*, 1978, pp. 19, 20, typescript kindly loaned to Jo Stanley by John S Fletcher. There's a mistaken belief that the nearby chimney is from the tannery; actually it's from the quarry's cutting machinery.

Women and children helped farms survive. Haymaking at Fletcher House Farm, Lumb Lane, Almondbury c1890s, when Ben Stringer was there. Note large two-storey barn behind. Image courtesy of Huddersfield Local History Library, Yi 189 BTC, 674 998.

Doing two jobs was normal. Farming families needed more than one source of income to survive. They had to diversify. Sometimes the focus was more on farming, sometime less so. For 1841 Census, in Almondbury and Lingards all farmers apparently said they were single-income farmers. But actually textiles and agriculture could also combine with someone being a dyer, labourer on new local reservoirs or railway tracks, corn miller, manure dealer, cattle drover, cow leech (healer), egg merchant, rat catcher, wood cutter, horse keeper, pig jobber, charcoal merchant, milk vendor or someone who contracted themselves out to work on others' farms.

Farming needs extra hands in an ad hoc way, always on tap. Daughters, sons, wives, mothers and in- laws are the small satellites inevitably locked in endless orbit of the land that is their home and means of livelihood. A small farmer could not manage without a spouse and children – plus a beast to do the heavy hauling. Many members of the versatile 'farming' families in the area would, for the rest of the century, contribute to the household income by also being employed in textiles, as well labouring unpaid on the farm before and after their day's paid work or schooling.

Broadfield had been the site of a leather tannery since at least 1805. The tanning process was so noxious that the law forced tanneries to locate away from dense

habitation. Edmund may have already been a tanner and moved to Lingards because it was far enough from Huddersfield to be legal. Or he may have had access to land and chose this add-on to his normal farming business. Tanner Shaw presumably took in sheep and cattle hides from local slaughterhouses, then sold the end product to curriers or manufacturers. Local livestock became saddles, boots, and belts for driving textile machinery in the growing number of mills.

Nationwide, it was a time when the main occupations for men were manufacturing and agricultural. They were roughly balanced, about a quarter each of the entire population. For women nationwide, agriculture was the fourth biggest occupation. But only seven per cent of all women were in agriculture.[7] If the daughters of Edmund's farm labourers had followed the typical pattern they would have been far more likely to go into residential domestic service, perhaps in the stylish new Edgerton Green area.

**The 1850s: farming starts to boom, briefly**

Textile areas like this boomed when the Crimea War (1853-6) brought high demand for warm woollen uniforms. Equally the railway building boom of the 1840s and 1850s swelled urban populations including Huddersfield's. By contrast only about 1.3 per cent of the working population in the Holme and Colne Valleys were employed on the land: at least 1,013 people.[8]

Tanning work seems not to have gone very well at Edmund's Broadfield Farm because by 1851 no tannery worker was listed in the census. Gone was Sam Sykes, the live-in fell-monger who in 1841 had scraped the hair from the pelts and soaked hides in urine as part of the fat and salt removal process. The explanation is likely to be that tanning was becoming a more scientific process. It involved labour-saving machinery, for example for dividing a skin into flesh and grain layers. Premises were being purpose-built with wooden louvres at windows to ventilate the process.

There were eighteen people living in the four dwellings that comprised Broadfield in 1851. None of the four main householders described himself as a farmer so possibly their second-income role was proving more lucrative. Davison was a wool sorter with a family of five. William Sykes was a coal miner with four family members. Juno Sykes (seemingly his brother) was a blacksmith and had a wife and child. And George Tinman was a joiner with three family members. After Edmund Shaw vanished from

[7] GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, England Dep through time | Industry Statistics | Occupation data classified by the Booth main sectors plus sex, *A Vision of Britain through Time*. Retrieved from: www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10061325/cube/IND_BOOTH1841_SEC on 2/09/2018.

[8] This is based on a total local population of 77,306 in the 23 townships. Population Tables, *Census of England and Wales*, 1851, HMSO, London.

public record in 1838 six male proprietors were listed in the trade directories until 1901. They included 'Richard Shaw, gent', who was probably Edmund's son: he and wife Betty had five acres in 1851. As a woollen manufacturing proprietor, of Barrow & Shaw, Richard used one of the farm buildings 'the burling hoil,' as a finishing shop and warehouse. But he also had so much land in Bradford that when he sold it off it became Peel Park.[9] Richard's son-in-law, Nathan Sutcliffe (1831-1922) was living at Broadfield and listed as a woollen manufacturer, by 1857, so it seems he was more in the in-laws' woollen business than in farming or in his own family business: painters and decorators in Slaithwaite since 1789.

Although Lingards was just a tiny township of 760 acres the number of farmers there nearly tripled from seven in 1841 to twenty in 1861. However, the majority of farms were small, suggesting family divvying-up may have gone on.

**The 1860s: peak farming in the Kirklees area**

Nationwide the population had doubled since 1801. But in this Victorian decade of high industry the agricultural population was declining. In Almondbury it dropped from 258 in 1851 to 171 in 1861.

On the farm that was to become today's Stirley Community Farm, Ben Shaw lived from 1861-1881. He worked there, from at least the age of 44 to 64, along with his wife and children. The farm had doubled in size from 9 acres to 20 acres in a decade. This reflected a new trend: a decline in the number of farmers and an increase in the number of small farmers, who perhaps gave up and went into industry. Ben had no other occupation, just 'farmer', but nearly a third of his brethren on other farms (31 out of 69) were now declaring two occupations, which may suggest that running a small farm was becoming less and less possible.

**1870s & 1880s: fewer farmers and more milk men**

It seems that the Great Depression of British agriculture (1873 to 96) did not have a major effect on local farming. This was mainly because grain was not much grown here except for families' use. Of the whole West Riding's 1,770,359 acres the two biggest areas were permanent pasture (760,008 acres) and corn and cereals (228,342 acres). The 1880s' continued decline in local farming meant that in Almondbury there was a dwindling number of farm labourers – just sixteen. But farmer numbers stayed steady-ish, at 108, up from 102. This suggests that farm sizes may have decreased and technology increased as ploughs, and even the first steam tractors appeared. Ben Shaw at Stirley Farm seems to have been prospering; he now had three servants.

[9] 'Notes on Local history: The Slaithwaite 'New line'', *Colne Valley Guardian*, 19 March 1954.

At Lingards, where the population had barely increased, there were 29 farmers, at least three of whom were women. Of the four heads of households at Broadfield only one was a 'farmer': Nathan Sutcliffe who now had a relatively large farm of 24 acres. Richard Shaw, his father-in-law, appears to have partly given up working the land and become a warehouseman, with a secondary role as cotton master (employer).

No-one in Lingards described themselves as a dairy farmer or milk dealer. But undoubtedly the expanding numbers of nearby textile workers meant the demand for milk existed. Milk dealers nationwide were by this time taking their full pails – some still hanging from wooden yokes worn round the deliverer's neck and shoulders – down local streets to urban customers. Proportionately fewer households had their own cow by now. There were only 109,705 cows in milk or calf in the whole West Riding (twice the number of pigs, but a seventh the number of sheep) in 1880.

Milk dealers had been listed in the greater Huddersfield area since 1841. Almondbury had had the first and only one until a decade later in 1851 when Dalton had two 'milkmen' and Lindley had one 'milk vendor'. In 1861 Almondbury (and nowhere else, had milk sellers, three in number, which dropped to one 'milk dealer' in 1871, plus two milk sellers in Lindley. By 1881 Farnley Tyas had six milk dealers to Almondbury's three. There was just one in milk dealer in Lepton. These small reported numbers surely understate the actual extent of farm women and men creating a bridge between grazing field and needy terraced streets.

**1890s: producing milk for mill workers**

In the whole of the area that became Kirklees farming was still declining, as it was nationwide. Slaithwaite, followed by Almondbury, were the two main farming townships in our area. They were followed by Meltham, Golcar, Honley, and Kirkheaton in that order.

Milk dealing was one of the most noticeable of these rural businesses: Almondbury had four dealers and Kirkheaton two in 1891. Throughout Britain the dairy business was no longer a situation where milk was delivered by farmers carrying the healthy product still warm from their own happily-grazing Buttercups and Bessies. Busy cities now had milk dealers who keep their milk-producing units entirely indoors, often in insanitary cellars. Infected by bovine tuberculosis, such creatures worsened the new killer lung disease, human tuberculosis, for overcrowded city folks. Huddersfield's rural dairy farmers benefited from consumer's fears of infection because they could market their milk as superior: it came from cows that roamed the fields looked after by the very farmer who was also the retailer. Indeed, it was the manure from their

milkman's cows that also enabled mill workers to grow better food on their allotments; there was an organic cycling.

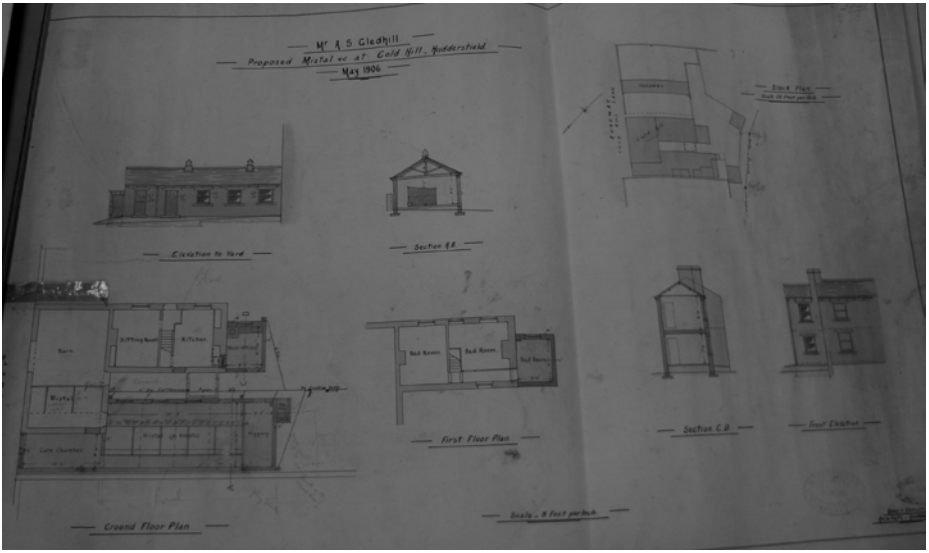
Some farmers were doing well enough to expand farm buildings and allow the (usually attached) barns to hold more cows. Several asked the landlords for permission to improve the space. Arthur Gledhill submitted this design for Cold Hill in 1906. Poverty led to other buildings falling into dereliction as the image below shows.

Benomlee, Almondbury, showing farm buildings that had seen better days. Image courtesy of Huddersfield Local History Library, BTC 728.67, 699 690.

**The 1900s**

Farm folk needed help to survive. In this decade two key farming organisations began. Labourers organised from 1906 into what became National Union of Agricultural and Allied Workers (NUAAW). And farmers united in the National Farmers Union from 1908. The NFU, to which the Gledhills, future tenants at Stirley, belonged later, existed not least to tell governments about farmers' interests in the major depression. Milk was not imported from abroad so the Kirklees area dairy farmers were probably hit less hard than those in mixed farming down south who

were affected by increasing importation, for example Canadian and New Zealand cheese. And our local people always had a job in the mills to fall back on, whatever their gender. In the whole County Borough of Huddersfield there were only 34 women working in agriculture but 8,932 in textile fabric occupations.[10]




Plans of proposed alterations to Arthur Gledhill's mistal of Cold Hill Farm in 1906. Plans produced by Abbey and Hanson architects, Huddersfield, May 1906 West Yorkshire Archive Service, DD/RE/459. With thanks to AHR for permission to publish.

By contrast to this stability, over in Almondbury the agricultural population down to only 58. At Stirley Farm Edward Mathews had replaced Lydia Hirst. Nothing can be traced of him or Lydia now, indicating probably that they failed to make a go of farming. The entire local population has expanded to 14,436, almost double the 1841 number, meaning that the 58 farmers were numerically and proportionately even less significant. However, local farmers' product – milk – was crucial to the physical development of all those people whose health suffered in the mills.Lingards was now formally part of Slaithwaite. Broadfield was the site of seven households: long-stayer David Dyson at number 1, the historic building connected to his wife's Sutcliffe forbears, was a farmer; at number 3 Broadfield there was a market gardener; and Nathan Sutcliffe, at no 4, the farmhouse, although 70, was still farming.

[10] Occupational Tables condensed, table 35, Census of England and Wales, 1901.

Buildings reflected farms' multi-purpose nature. Here this clothmaker's homestead at Lower Common Farm, Sharp Lane, Almondbury, shows barn and outhouses (left) and a dyehouse by the stream (right), but no cows or sheep. This 1921 pictures shows how little the buildings had changed at that time, even though textile work was no longer its business. Image courtesy of Huddersfield Local History Library, Yi 189 BTC 631, 651 076

**Conclusion**

The national decline in agricultural activity, and therefore the change of farm dwellings, hit hard here in the period. If we look closely we see the complexity of all that lies in the word 'farm'. 'Clusters of many small entrepreneurs with many skills, changing constantly to tackle current vicissitudes' might be a better description. Agricultural life brought more varied challenges than working in factory-based textile production. Compensations were a well-aired outdoor life and relative independence. The buildings reflected the struggles to survive. That legacy can still sometimes be discerned behind today's alpaca studs, farm food shops, glamping opportunities and equestrian arenas, which are discussed in part two of this article.

# FIVE GENERATIONS OF MITCHELL MILLWRIGHTS OF THE HOLME VALLEY AND BEYOND

## Sheila Grove

### My Branch of the Family and Our Connection to R. J. 'Spitfire' Mitchell

My millwright great-grandfather, Joseph Mitchell (1837–1911), a great-grandson of the first-known Mitchell millwright, Joseph (1752), was born in a cottage at Lower Mytholm Bridge Mill, Honley. He then lived at successively at Bank End, Thurstonland; in Almondbury; and moved to Oldham, Lancs., where he worked as a millwright in the cotton mills. His son Sam, a joiner (1873–1939), told my mother, who told me when I was a teenager, that we were related to Reginald Joseph Mitchell (1895–1937), who designed the Spitfire aeroplane just before the start of the Second World War. As my father was in the RAF, I was curious to find out more.

Gordon Mitchell's biography of his father R. J. Mitchell, stated that R. J.'s great grandfather, Uriah was born in 1814, was a millwright in a woollen factory and lived near Holmfirth. I eventually found Uriah in the 1841 Census, aged 25, listed with his wife and young children at Bank End, Thurstonland, adjacent to my Joseph Mitchell, then aged 2, living with his millwright father, Charles aged 40. *Letters of Administration* from 1838 provided proof that Charles and Uriah were brothers and shared the same father.[1] A related notice in the *Leeds Mercury*, in Feb 1838, named Joseph's sons as Charles Mitchell, of Mytholm Bridge and John Mitchell, of Hinchliffe Mill, both millwrights, as the two administrators, plus the other sons Uriah, Crowther and Godfrey. This encouraged me to continue my research into the wider family of millwright Mitchells.[2] This article outlines my findings and discusses the work of a millwright in general.

### The Work of a Millwright

A millwright was a multi-skilled craftsman, knowledgeable in arithmetic, geometry, velocity, and mechanics, working in wood and increasingly in metal, making use of available power sources, especially water and later steam, and able to make, install and maintain the equipment and machinery for all kinds of mills and factories (which in the Holme Valley, were mainly textile mills). By the twentieth century and today in textile areas, millwrights are more commonly called textile engineers, but previously

[1] Probate Records, Borthwick Institute, York.

[2] Charles and John were both independent millwrights with their own workshops (Censuses and Directories). Charles' workshop was originally at Lower Mytholm Bridge Mill, Honley, (1838 Honley Township Map and Valuation (WYAS Kirklees: MC5 and WYK 1103/11/1/3), and in the 1850s at Scar Nook/End (Thurstonland Township Records: Poor Rate Assessments KC 271/93-99).

the Mitchell millwright was a 'jack of all trades', as confirmed by the earliest surviving Mitchell's Account Book 'No. 3 1871–1893', which is explored more below. In the Censuses, the Mitchells often had combined job titles which reveal some of their skills: millwright and … carpenter, joiner, machinist, machine maker, engine maker, iron founder and so on.

About one-third of the Mitchell millwrights were self-employed or were partners or assistants in the family businesses. However, by the mid-nineteenth century, with the advent of larger textile mills and more complex machinery, a number of the younger Mitchells, who had been trained as millwrights by their fathers, became mill employees, working in specialist millwrighting jobs such as mechanic, machinist, engine fitter, engine caster, and engine tenter/tender (minder and repairer). Among the Bolton branch of Mitchells a couple became mill draughtsmen, and a few of the general millwright employees were promoted to mill foreman or manager, ending their careers as a self-employed machine agent, mill furnisher or consulting engineer. The rest of this article traces the work of the Mitchell millwrights through the generations.

**Generation 1: Joseph Mitchell (1752–c.1830s) Millwright of Honley,**

Joseph Mitchell, son of George, was baptised on 28 January 1752 in Honley Chapel. He married Nancy Crowther and had 8 sons, 5 of whom were millwrights. Mary Jagger, a life-long resident of Honley, published a book on Honley in 1914, based on her memories and research. She describes the neighbouring hamlets of Smithy Place and Brockholes, both in Honley Township, 80-90 years previously, as a few old and humble dwellings in the hollow and a few scattered homesteads on the uplands. She does not mention Joseph Mitchell by name, but states that the chief occupation at that time was 'coal-getting with the exception of a few employed at the dye-house, millwrights' shop or on farms.'[3] I suspect that Joseph and his family lived at Ridings, an old homestead on the cliff-top just above his workshop. Two of Joseph and Nancy's newly-married sons, Joseph junior, (b. 1780) millwright (ancestor of myself and of R. J. Mitchell) and James (b. 1782) clothier, were living at Ridings at the baptisms of their children in Honley Chapel between 1802 and 1805, so were probably still living in the family home.

Painting of the Ridings by William Abbs. Photograph courtesy of John Cross.

[3] Mary Jagger, *The History of Honley*, Alfred Jubb & Sons, Huddersfield, 1914, p. 270

**Joseph and his five Millwright sons**

The Parish Registers for Honley Chapel record Joseph's career progression at the baptisms of his children. In 1776 and 1777 he was a carpenter, in 1780 and 1782 a mill carpenter, and 1784–1788 a millwright. An agreement, dated to 10 September 1785, with specifications and diagrams in which Joseph of Honley agreed to build a waterwheel and fulling stocks for a mill at Jumples, Ovenden, near Halifax has survived, demonstrating that his professional competence was recognised some distance away.[4] From Joseph, I have counted 56 Mitchell descendants, plus a number of sons-in-law, who worked as millwrights or in similar jobs, spreading from Honley and Thurstonland to the rest of the Holme Valley and beyond to the areas of Glossop in Derbyshire, and Bolton and Oldham in Lancashire, plus at least three to the USA.

Sketch by Hezekiah Mitchell aged 10 of his millwright father, Thomas Mitchell, recovering from a broken leg.

The eldest of Joseph Snr's 5 millwright sons was John (1776 – 1846), who was trained by, and worked for, his father.[5] John occupied a house at Bank End, Thurstonland, from at least 1818, and after his father's death in the 1830s inherited Smithy Place millwrights' business which subsequently passed down 3 more generations of John's descendants.

Joseph's second son Thomas (1777–1855) moved to Simmondley near Glossop, then to Bolton, Lancs. Joseph junior (1780–1837), my ancestor, moved from Ridings, Honley to Bank End, Thurstonland, next to John and almost certainly worked at Smithy Place. George (1784–1862) lived initially at Bank End, but then moved to Hullock farmhouse in Fulstone where he worked as a millwright, clothier and stone delver. Youngest son Isaac (1786–1855) followed his older brother Thomas to Glossop, where he worked first as a cornmiller, and then as a millwright, in nearby villages.

**Generation 3: Joseph (1799–1873) and his younger brothers John junior (1804–89) and George (1809–82), three surviving millwright sons of John**

Joseph, the eldest, presumably inherited the tenancy of the workshop from his father. His wife Mary Ann neé Lockwood (1800–85) had no children and lived in a house in what is now New Mill Road, adjoining the workshop in Honley. His house

[4] WYAS Calderdale Archives at Halifax, RP 779/4. Part of the document is reproduced in *Fulling to Fustianopolis: A History of the Textile Industry in the Hebden Bridge Area*. (The Alternative Technology Centre, Hebden), p. 3.
[5] WYAS Kirklees: KC/65/338 legal paper.

and workshop are listed on the 1838 Honley Township Map and Valuation Schedule which shows him as neighbour to Edward Balmforth his business partner. This partnership ended the following year and by the 1841 Census, Edward Bamford (sic), machine maker aged 34, had moved to Roebuck Yard, John Street, Huddersfield.

There is no evidence that Joseph found a new business partner, so my guess is that he sub-let a part of his workshop to each of his younger brothers, John Jnr. and George, enabling all three to be independent millwrights but working under the same roof. The 1841 Census lists George as assisted by his son Henry. Ten years later, George was listed as a millwright and engine maker, then assisted by his 20-year-old millwright son Sam. These two sons eventually left him to work in nearby woollen mills – Henry as a mill engine tenter (tender), and Sam as a mill mechanic. However, Joseph had no son to assist or succeed him, although in 1851 his millwright nephew, William age 18 was living with him at Smithy Place.

In 1841, John Jnr. was listed as a millwright employing four labourers and in 1861 as employing nine men. He advertised several times in local newspapers for millwrights and blacksmiths. He was obviously the most successful of the three brothers. He lived the longest and was assisted by his only son John Hirst Mitchell (1833-1905) who, by 1881, was his millwright foreman.

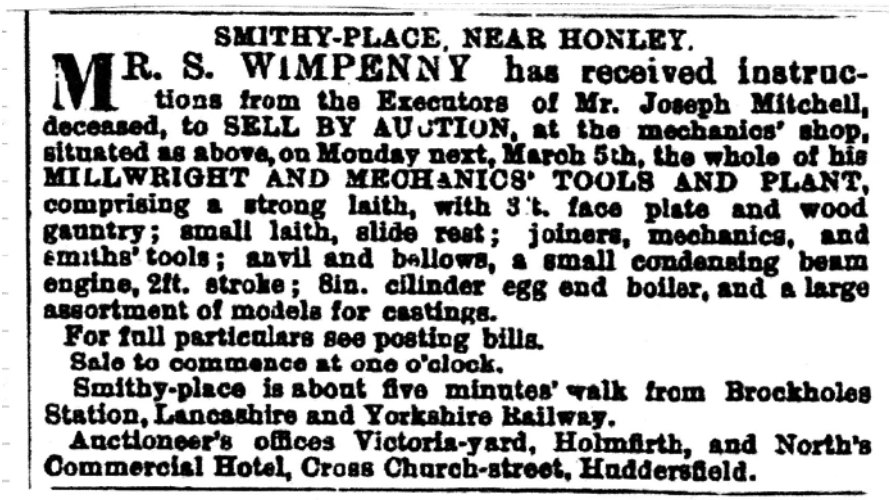
**The Death of Joseph (1799–1873) and subsequent events**

Joseph died in 1873. In his will, he bequeathed 'all my stock in trade... to my brother George absolutely'. However, this was accompanied by the onerous condition that George pay 5s. weekly to Joseph's widow. Not surprisingly, George refused, as 5s. weekly was a large amount. As a result, two advertisements appeared in the *Huddersfield Chronicle* in 1877 the first, for a sale by auction, at the mechanics' shop, of the deceased Mr. Mitchell's 'tools and plant' and the second to let out the 'millwright's shop and yard.' I am almost certain that Joseph's brother John, and son John H., purchased the freehold of the mechanic's shop in order to have the freedom to rebuild and enlarge it.

**The Mitchell's workshop and subsequent extensions.**

Mary Jagger included a photo of John, and remembered him as a 'household word in Brockholes… he was one of the old-time workers who combined Christian virtues with the daily duties of industrial life… the quaint mill-wright's shop [was] surrounded with arches of sweet-smelling wood waiting to be fashioned into droning mill-wheels or thumping stocks'. Describing the changes and improved facilities in Brockholes in the 1880s, Jagger mentions the following under 1882: 'The millwrights' shop has been replaced by a larger building to meet the demands of modern

progress which must be obeyed It is erected on the old site by the descendants of the original owner'.[6]



SMITHY-PLACE, NEAR HONLEY.

MR. S. WIMPENNY has received instructions from the Executors of Mr. Joseph Mitchell, deceased, to SELL BY AUCTION, at the mechanics' shop, situated as above, on Monday next, March 5th, the whole of his MILLWRIGHT AND MECHANICS' TOOLS AND PLANT, comprising a strong laith, with 3 ft. face plate and wood gauntry; small laith, slide rest; joiners, mechanics, and smiths' tools; anvil and bellows, a small condensing beam engine, 2ft. stroke; 8in. cilinder egg end boiler, and a large assortment of models for castings.

For full particulars see posting bills.

Sale to commence at one o'clock.

Smithy-place is about five minutes' walk from Brockholes Station, Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway.

Auctioneer's offices Victoria-yard, Holmfirth, and North's Commercial Hotel, Cross Church-street, Huddersfield.

Advert from *Huddersfield Chronicle* 3 March 1877, p. 5

**Generation 4: John Hirst Mitchell (1833–1905)**

John Hirst Mitchell was a millwright and machine maker, who in 1871, had patented with his father, 'a new or improved apparatus for utilising the waste heat from steam boilers and other furnaces, thereby economising fuel.'[7] Active in both religious and public affairs, he was a Wesleyan Superintendent, and with his son Isaac, promoted the building of the present Brockholes Wesleyan Chapel. He served on the Local Board and was appointed Deputy Chairman of the Thurstonland Urban District Council at its first meeting on 3 January 1985. He inherited the tenancy of his father's Bank End House and 30-acre farm, which is mentioned in the account book below.

**The Mitchells' Account Book 'No. 3 1871–93'[8]**

The book was obviously kept by J. H. Mitchell as his father's foreman and later successor. Of great interest to both business historian and local historian, it demonstrates that the general millwright at that time was indeed a jack of all trades. It itemises the supply, installation and repair of machinery, parts and equipment for local mills and factories, as well as smaller jobs for local institutions (churches,

[6] Jagger, *Honley*, 1914, p. 272; Jagger, *Honley*, 1914, p. 286

[7] *The Engineer*, vol. 33.

[8] Found in the former Mitchells' workshop by the present occupant Philip Lodge. Now deposited in the Kirklees Archives.

schools, Thurstonland Cricket Club etc.), for farmers (repairing farm equipment and machinery), for tradesmen (repairing a joiner's lathe, a baker's oven and an oat-baker's furnace plate) and for private households (repairing a clothes' wringer). He also did contract work for the local authority repairing roads, cisterns and wells and sharpening quarry tools. Sometimes he was paid in kind, such as free grinding for the corn from his farm at the corn mills or cloth for his wife from the textile mills.

John H. hired out his farm labourer Edwin Lockwood to work on neighbouring farms as well as for carting goods and for transporting furniture when people moved house. There are a few entries for the sale of his farm produce, including halves of pigs to the local grocer and butcher. Also included are his half-yearly rent accounts for his Bank End house, farm, farm buildings and farm cottages, leased from the Brooke family (Huddersfield industrialists and philanthropists), 1882–1891. He notes that he paid his last farm rent in January 1891, when he and his son Isaac moved into his newly-built pair of semi-detached houses called Oakville, conveniently situated at the bottom of Oakes Lane, Brockholes, immediately above the future Wesleyan Chapel and across the Green from his millwright's shop. Thus ended the occupation of Bank End, Thurstonland, by at least four generations of the extended Mitchell family of millwrights.

**Generation 5: John Mitchell & Sons of Brockholes, Isaac (1865–1933), Herbert (1870–1932) and Charles Hirst (1870–1964)**

These three sons were also skilled mechanics like their father. In the 1891 and 1901 Censuses, Isaac was listed as a millwright and a machinist. Herbert was initially apprenticed to and electrical light engineer and was later a qualified electrical engineer. Charles Hirst was apprenticed to a machine maker and was later a millwright and a machine maker.

**The Partnership and Its Dissolution**

By the 1890s, John H. Mitchell had formed a business partnership with his sons (the three named above), according to the printed heading of a memo inserted into the Account Book. The partnership is confirmed by the will of John H. dated 9 January 1903, in which he leaves his business and premises to his three sons. By the time of Jubb's 1909 Directory, Charles had left to become a motor engineer in Huddersfield where he established his 'C. H. Mitchell' motor vehicle business, later taking up motor racing as a hobby. Soon afterwards, Herbert and Isaac parted company. In the 1911 Census, Herbert, still living in Brockholes, was a 'dealer and contractor in electrical goods, employer', assisted by his son Edmund Hirst, aged 13.

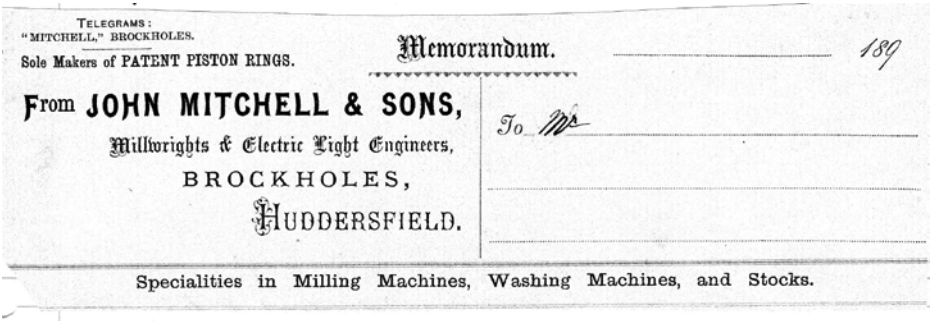
**Isaac and Herbert early installers of electric lighting and telephones in the Holme Valley area**

Arc lamps, the first electric lamps, were invented in the mid-1870s, followed in the late 1870s by the more efficient incandescent lamps. The first factory locally to be lit by electricity, rather than gas, is thought to have been Elon Crowther and Alfred Sykes' worsted woollen Rock Mill, Brockholes, in November 1882, using a combination of arc and incandescent lamps.[9] As Rock Mill was situated very near to the Mitchells' Millwright's workshop, it is possible that this inspired Isaac and Herbert to become electricians. Isaac, being a full-time millwright, probably attended evening classes in electrical engineering which were offered by the Huddersfield Technical School and Mechanic's Institution as early as the 1886–87 academic year. In the 1891 Census, Herbert age 20, still living with his parents at Bank End, Thurstonland, was apprenticed to an electrical engineer.

The Mitchells' Millwrighting Account Book 'No. 3 1871–93', records Isaac's first installation of electric lighting, which was at Messrs Thomas Butterworth & Son at Hinchcliffe Mill, S.W. of Holmfirth in November 1888. Isaac had to travel by train to Bradford to purchase a dynamo, wire, lamps etc.; make pulleys, shafts and other equipment at his millwright's shop; fit everything; and then provide on-going maintenance until January 1892. A comment in the Account Book for 1 April 1889 states, 'The electric light work isn't so very prosperous'. The Mitchells obviously underestimated their costs for parts and labour but were not discouraged from further electrical work.

**Innovations at the turn of the Century**

By the late 1890s the Mitchells' millwrighting work was still flourishing and they even started to export textile machinery abroad: to St. Petersburg, Russia in 1896 and to Ontario, Canada in 1898. By 1897 they were starting to sell and repair bicycles. They also installed internal telephones for large businesses and continued to repair telephone wires and to fit electric bells (to summon servants etc). They were especially busy fitting up electric lights in local mills, homes and small businesses


TELEGRAMS:
"MITCHELL," BROCKHOLES.
Sole Makers of PATENT PISTON RINGS.

Memorandum. 189

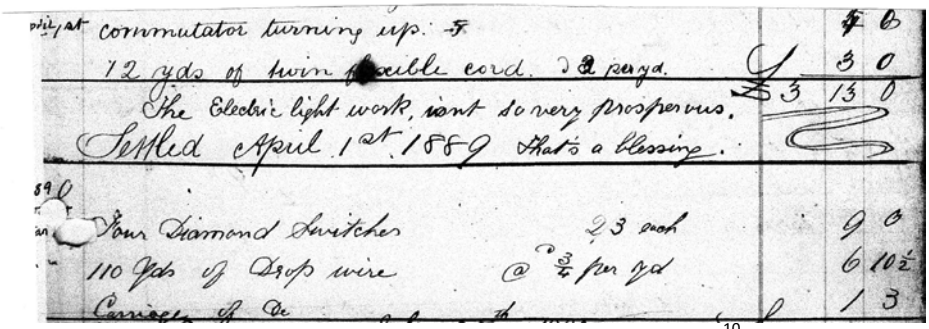
From JOHN MITCHELL & SONS,
Millwrights & Electric Light Engineers,
BROCKHOLES,
HUDDERSFIELD.

To Mr

Specialities in Milling Machines, Washing Machines, and Stocks.

Printed memo of John Mitchell and Sons. Photograph: Author's own

including the Brockholes Co-op Stores in 1895 and the Rock Inn in 1898, as well as street lighting for Honley and Thurstonland District Councils in 1898. Of course, J. H. Mitchell made sure that his home was among the first to be lit by electricity, as reported by the *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 18 August 1895: 'Permission was granted to Mr Mitchell to erect the necessary wires over the road at Brockholes for supplying electric light to his new house [Oakville, Oakes Lane]'. All this electricity was supplied by a gas-powered dynamo in the Mitchells' workshop, as it was not until 21 March


Commutator turning ups.
12 yds of twin flexible cord.
The Electric light work, isn't so very prosperous.
Settled April 1st 1889 that's a blessing.
Four Diamond Switches
110 Yds of Drop wire
Carriage

1904 that Honley District Council opened its own electricity works.[10]

**Isaac, the last Mitchell millwright and machine maker, died 1933**

Despite the departure of Isaac's two brothers, the business continued to prosper. Isaac's 1917 Wages Book, still kept in the workshop, names 23 employees (but not their jobs), including 3 married women. Maybe the women were recruited for munitions work as according to local hearsay, part of the building was used for making bomb cases during the First World War.

Like his father and grandfather, Isaac was an inventor and, together with a colleague, filed a patent for a dyeing machine.[11] He had no family successor. His only son,

Mitchells' Millwrighting Account Book 'No. 3 1871–93'. Photograph: Author's own

Laurence John Mitchell (1901–1963) became a motor engineer and founded Brockholes Motor Company, with his father as Director, initially using part of his father's millwright's workshop before later moving to Huddersfield. Isaac died in 1933, leaving a brief will but no mention of his business. After Isaac's death, the business passed into the hands of one of Isaac's workers John W. Peace, who kept

[10] Mary Jagger, *The History of Honley*, Alfred Jubb and Sons, Huddersfield, 1914, pp. 75 and 272–3; Information from Philip Lodge.
[11] *Official Gazette of the United States Patent Office*, Filing date: 7 May 1924.

the name but turned the business into a limited company. After filing for bankruptcy in 1960 the business was taken on by France and Lodge both of whom had also worked for Isaac. Eventually the business passed into the hands of Brian Lodge, who then passed it on to his son Philip, who is the present director of Philip Lodge Ltd, and occupies the building erected in 1892 on the site of the original Mitchell's workshop.

**Afterword by Alan Brooke**

Sheila Grove's research into the history of the Mitchell millwright business and its off-shoots (of which this article is an edited version), and the archive of material in the form of account books, receipts, invoices etc., form an important addition to our knowledge of industry in the Huddersfield area and further afield. It is a reminder that the growth of the textile industry stimulated technological change in many other sectors of the economy. From water-wheels and wooden machinery, through the age of steam, to electricity, the telephone and the motor car, the activities of this local family firm illustrate the broad technological transformation inaugurated by the industrial revolution. As such it is of more than just local significance. The link of the name Mitchell with one of the most iconic machines of all time, the Spitfire, further underlines the way research can connect local history with wider events, sometimes in surprising ways.

It is intended to deposit this fascinating collection of papers, donated by the present occupant of the Mitchell workshop, with West Yorkshire Archive Service. Meanwhile, it is available for preview by Society members by contacting Alan Brooke.

**Biography**

Sheila Groves has an Honours Degree in History and worked as an Assistant Archivist in various Record Offices in Southern England for ten years. She has always been interested in Local History.

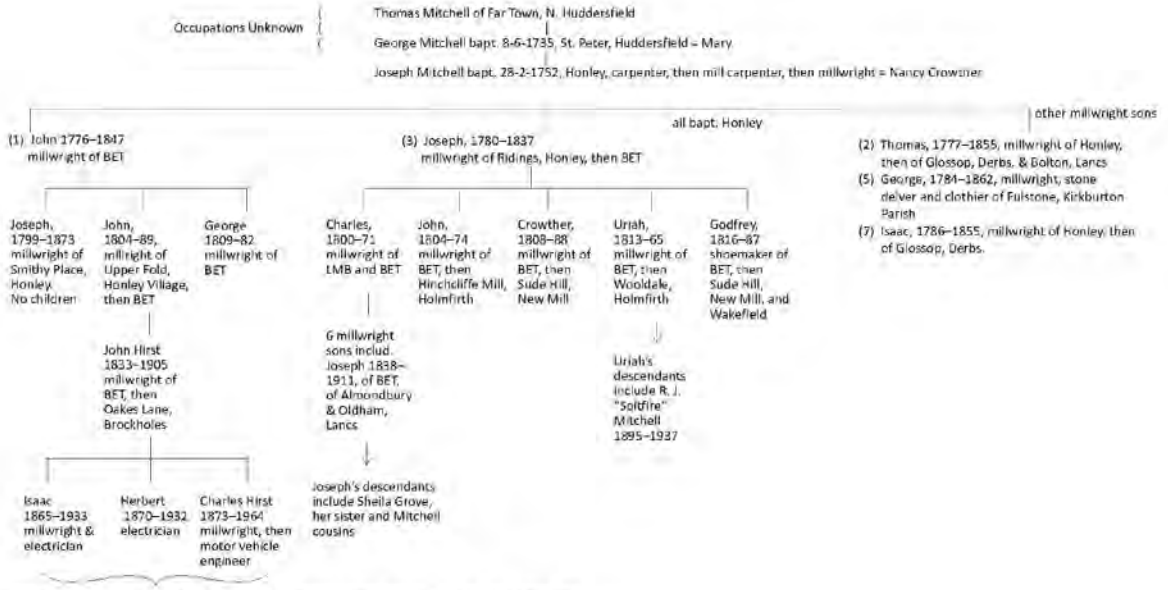
**Acknowledgements**

With grateful thanks to Alan and Pam Brooke and to Philip Lodge for their help and information without which this article would not have been possible.

**Summary Family Tree of the millwright Mitchells mentioned in the article by Sheila Grove**

Place names are in or near the Holme Valley, W. Yorks, unless stated otherwise. BET (Bank End, Thurstonland in Kirkburton Parish) was the home of many of the Mitchells for about 100 years, but no millwrights' workshop there, and LMB (Lower Mytholm Bridge Mill cottage) was the home of Charles Mitchell, both places near to the workshop in Smithy Place East, Honley.

Joseph Mitchell, b.1752, founded the millwrights' workshop at Smithy Place, Honley, which, via his eldest son John, remained in the family until 1933. Since then, it has continued on the same site, next to the Rock Inn, up to the present day, under different ownerships and now as more specialist textile engineers. Due to place-name and boundary changes, its address is now The Textile Machine Works, 190 New Mill Road, Brockholes, Honley.


Occupations Unknown
Thomas Mitchell of Far Town, N. Huddersfield
George Mitchell bapt. 8-6-1735, St. Peter, Huddersfield = Mary
Joseph Mitchell bapt. 28-2-1752, Honley, carpenter, then mill carpenter, then millwright = Nancy Crowther
all bapt. Honley
other millwright sons
(1) John 1776–1847 millwright of BET
(3) Joseph, 1780–1837 millwright of Ridings, Honley, then BET
(2) Thomas, 1777–1855, millwright of Honley, then of Glossop, Derbs. & Bolton, Lancs
(5) George, 1784–1862, millwright, stone delver and clothier of Fulstone, Kirkburton Parish
(7) Isaac, 1786–1855, millwright of Honley, then of Glossop, Derbs.
Joseph, 1799–1873 millwright of Smithy Place, Honley. No children
John, 1804–89, millright of Upper Fold, Honley Village, then BET
George 1809–82 millwright of BET
Charles, 1800–71 millwright of LMB and BET
John, 1804–74 millwright of BET, then Hinchcliffe Mill, Holmfirth
Crowther, 1808–88 millwright of BET, then Sude Hill, New Mill
Uriah, 1813–65 millwright of BET, then Wooldale, Holmfirth
Godfrey, 1816–87 shoemaker of BET, then Sude Hill, New Mill, and Wakefield
John Hirst 1833–1905 millwright of BET, then Oakes Lane, Brockholes
6 millwright sons includ. Joseph 1838–1911, of BET, of Almondbury & Oldham, Lancs
Uriah's descendants include R. J. "Softfire" Mitchell 1895–1937
Isaac 1865–1933 millwright & electrician
Herbert 1870–1932 electrician
Charles Hirst 1873–1964 millwright, then motor vehicle engineer
Joseph's descendants include Sheila Grove, her sister and Mitchell cousins

Started as partners in their father's business "John Mitchell & Sons, millwrights (later "millwrights and electrical engineers") of Brockholes", but by 1910, Herbert and Charles had left to start their own businesses, leaving Isaac to run it until his death, after which it continued as "John Mitchell & Sons (although under different ownership) until c. 1960.

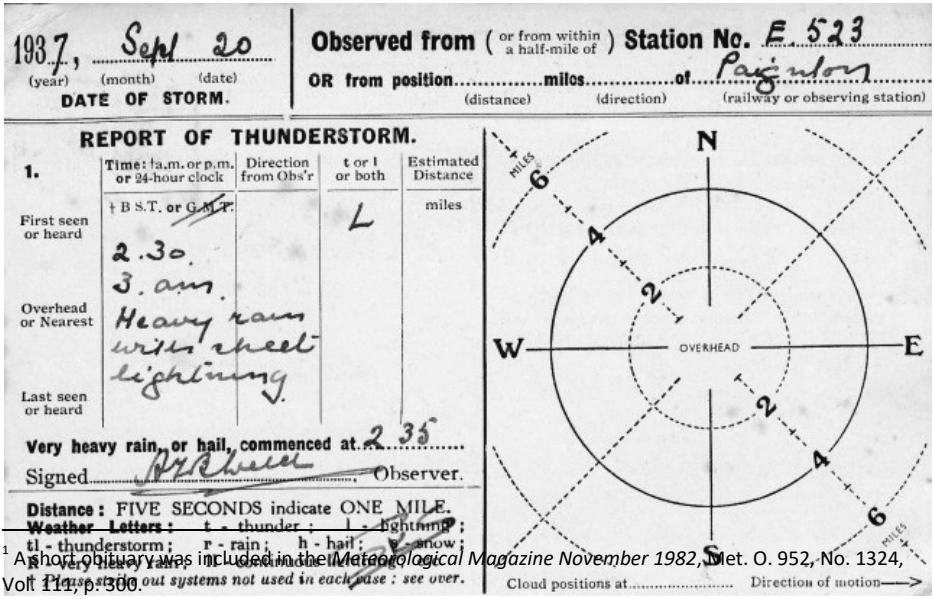
There are still descendants of these 3 brothers living in the Huddersfield and Holme Valley area.

## STATION 312 REPORTING…

## Cheryl and Matthew Toomey

A few years ago, a speculative auction purchase of philatelic papers presaged a number of fascinating research projects involving amongst others - reuniting an illustrious family with a letter discussing the eviction of an unwanted tenant in the 1800s; correcting an Essex landmark's inaccurate genealogy (due to confusion over the recurrent use of a family Christian name); adding to the resources of a northern museum with a letter concerning the competition for raw materials between rival entrepreneurs during the industrial revolution, and so to the subject of this article: thunderstorms.

Initially, it was a struggle to understand why anyone might be interested in this rather obscure topic or would have held on to the peculiar collection of ephemera which comprised: a paperback booklet entitled 'The Scientific Roll from 1881' inscribed in pencil with the name W. R. Bower; a collection of postcards recording thunderstorm sightings and observations and a selection of articles from the press on lightning and water damage. Research quickly revealed that this obtuse miscellany represented the lifetime passion and contribution of a renowned Yorkshireman from Huddersfield, S. Morris Bower (1901-1982), known as Morris, whose fascination with thunderstorms sparked the interest and support of thousands of volunteers around the UK.[1]


1937, Sept 20 (year) (month) (date) DATE OF STORM.
Observed from ( or from within a half-mile of ) Station No. E 523
OR from position ..... miles ..... of Paignton (distance) (direction) (railway or observing station)
REPORT OF THUNDERSTORM.
1. Time: a.m. or p.m. or 24-hour clock | Direction from Obs'r | t or l or both | Estimated Distance
† B.S.T. or G.M.T.
First seen or heard: 2.30. | L | miles
Overhead or Nearest: 3. am. Heavy rain with sheet lightning
Last seen or heard:
Very heavy rain, or hail, commenced at 2.35
Signed ..... Observer.
Distance: FIVE SECONDS indicate ONE MILE.
Weather Letters: t - thunder; l - lightning; tl - thunderstorm; r - rain; h - hail; s - snow; R - very heavy rain; T - continuous thunder.
Please send out systems not used in each case: see over.
N W E S OVERHEAD 2 4 6 MILES
Cloud positions at ..... Direction of motion →

Summer Thunderstorm Census Postcards 1933. Photograph: Authors' own

[1] A short obituary was included in the *Meteorological Magazine November 1982*, Met. O. 952, No. 1324, Voll 111, p. 300.

The first London Meteorological Society was established in 1823 and marked the beginning of coordinated measurement and regular reporting of weather statistics. Although, notably in 1723, it was Dr James Jurin (a highly regarded scientist) who made 'the earliest English effort for securing observations made with comparable instruments upon a uniform system.'[2]

Background for the collection of weather data specifically related to thunderstorms, dates back to at least 1857 when G. J. Symons, a young meteorological reporter, published his first paper, 'On the Thunderstorms of 1857.'[3] G. J. Symons went on to

NUMBER OF ACCIDENTS IN 1857–59.

| | 1857. | 1858. | 1859. | Total. |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Men killed | 4 | 7 | 8 | 19 |
| Woman ,, | 1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Men injured | 8 | 18 | 23 | 49 |
| Women ,, | | 7 | 4 | 11 |
| Horses killed | 2 | 20 | 2 | 24 |
| ,, injured | .. | 2 | .. | 2 |
| Oxen killed | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| ,, injured | 1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Sheep and Lambs killed | 15 | 43 | 21 | 79 |
| ,, ,, injured | .. | 2 | .. | 2 |
| Cat killed | 1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Dog ,, | .. | 1 | .. | 1 |
| Pig ,, | .. | 1 | .. | 1 |
| Churches injured | 2 | 4 | 4 | 10 |
| Houses ,, | 11 | 17 | 14 | 42 |
| Chimneys ,, | 3 | 7 | 2 | 12 |
| Barns and Stables injured | 2 | 3 | .. | 5 |
| Mills ,, | 1 | 1 | .. | 2 |
| Flag Towers ,, | 2 | .. | .. | 2 |
| Railway Station ,, | 1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Engine House ,, | 1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Gasometer ,, | 1 | .. | .. | 1 |
| Ricks ,, | 2 | .. | 1 | 3 |
| Vessels in Harbour ,, | 2 | .. | .. | 2 |
| Trees ,, | 12 | 5 | 11 | 28 |
| Schools ,, | .. | 2 | .. | 2 |
| Railway Train ,, | .. | 1 | .. | 1 |
| Waggon ,, | .. | 1 | .. | 1 |
| Telegraphic Apparatus injured | .. | 3 | .. | 3 |
| Totals | 73 | 147 | 92 | 312 |

N.B.—This Table is undoubtedly extremely incomplete, probably not one quarter of the true total,—it merely gives the instances reported to the writer.

Table 1 from Symons - *English Thunderstorms,* 1857 -59

[2] Alexander Ramsay F.G.S, 'The Scientific Roll and Magazine of Systemized Notes', *Climate* Vol. 1, November 1881, p. 142.

[3] G. J. Symons, 'Results of an Investigation of the Phenomena of English Thunderstorms during the Years 1857 - 59', *Quarterly Journal of the Royal Meteorological Society*, Vol. XV, January 1889, no. 69.

acknowledge that 'the ramifications and importance [of studying thunderstorms] could not at the time be seen.'

Table 1 (reprinted on the previous page) is extracted from Symons' subsequent report 'Thunderstorms 1857-59'. It is fascinating in that as well as reporting on the occurrence of storms and the colour of the lightning, the collected data also shows the numbers of people, livestock, vehicles, trees, churches, schools struck or killed by lightening. As the author acknowledges, however, this work was more an anecdotal audit rather than an accurate statistical analysis, due to the limited data.

Samuel Morris Bower first started to record the occurrence of thunderstorms as a hobby around 1916.[4] He was just fifteen years old. As with Symons' earlier work, Morris Bower later told a newspaper reporter that when he began he had no specific applications in mind.

In 1924, letters from Mr S. Morris Bower of 10 Langley Terrace, Oakes, Huddersfield began to appear in the national and local press requesting volunteers to send in sightings of thunderstorms throughout the UK. At the same time, Morris Bower took up meteorology professionally and set up the Thunderstorm Census Organisation (TCO), taking over from the work of C. P. Cave who had issued circulars to observers for the British Rainfall Organisation.[5]

Morris' survey originally only covered the winter months, but in 1931 it was extended to cover the six summer months also. In Autumn of 1935, a full 12-month study replaced the two six month studies. Voluntary observers numbered 1,063 by 1932 and this had grown to 3,077 in 1937. Volunteers included teachers, doctors, students, lorry drivers, scientists, lighthouse keepers, clergymen, shepherds, workmen, policemen, postmen, seamen, airmen and even children got involved. A 12 year old eager youngster noted as a volunteer in one of the reports.[6]

By the early 1930s Morris had formalized the data required by issuing standard pre-printed postcards to his observers, which qualified for a 1/2d rate. Observers were encouraged to return as much information as possible, the basic details being:

[4] An article in the *Belfast News-Letter,* 3 April 1934, indicated that Morris Bower was a student at Manchester University.

[5] Information taken from *Nature,* Iss. 130, 15 October 1932, p. 587-588; C. P. Cave was president of the Royal Meteorological Society from 1913 - 1915 and again in 1926 - 1928. He wrote various articles and books including *Clouds and Weather Phenomenon*, published in 1926.

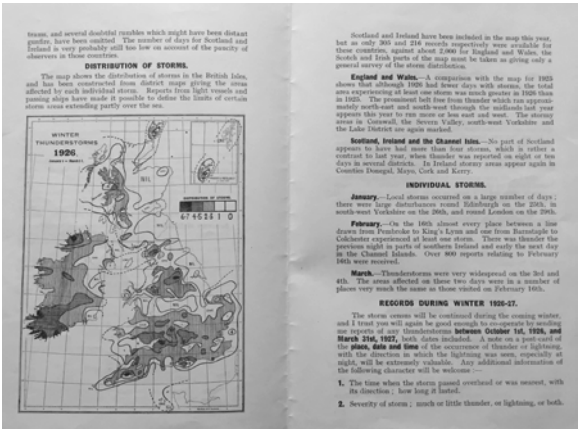
[6] 'Thunderstorm Hobby', *Belfast News-Letter,* 3 April 1934; 'Checking up Thunderstorms', *Yorkshire Evening Post,* 5 July 1936*,* p. 7.

1. Time and place of 1st observation
2. Time of commencement of heavy rain/hail
3. Time of nearest approach of the storm with direction and estimated distance
4. Time of final observation
5. Notes on damage caused

Clearly, the accuracy of this information would vary, however, some surprisingly detailed reports were produced.

In the early years, Morris used the information gleaned from his army of volunteers and issued a brief four-page report. The report for 1926 is shown below and states that during the first quarter of 1926, January - March, thunderstorms occurred on 49 out of 90 days. This was almost the same as in 1924 but eight days less than in 1925.

Between 1931 and 1937 the TCO published a series of detailed summaries which formed two bound volumes.[7] The cost of collecting data was burdensome and securing sufficient funds to carry on his investigations was a big challenge. By the end of 1935, Morris had an estimated accumulated cost of £3,927. By the end of 1937, Morris had accumulated a net debt of £863 in the TCO. He approached the Royal Meteorological Society for funding but was declined. However, the work continued on the basis of subscriptions, donations, publications sales and fees for private investigations but he was not able to fund any in depth research.[8] Help from volunteers facilitated investigations into lightning damage including research on trees. A South African Doctor was able to summarise injuries from lightning strikes, based on press cuttings sent to him by Morris. A man who headed a firm specialising in the manufacture of lightning conductors, provided a report



Summary report for 1926. Photograph: Authors' own

[7] S. Morris Bower, *A Survey of Thunderstorms of the British Islands, British Thunderstorms Volume's One and Two 1931 - 37*, the Thunderstorm Census Organisation, Huddersfield, 1947.

[8] Keith O. Mortimore, 'Thunderstorm Climatological Research in Great Britain and Ireland: A Progress Report and aims for future Study', Paper by *TORRO* circa 1990.

to Morris on typical lightning damage to property. Further reports were also received and used by Morris on ball lightning and damage to land transport.[9]

In 1939, Morris Bower joined the staff at the Meteorological Office and during the Second World War served at a number of war time stations including Falmouth, Sheffield and Topcliffe. Morris and his wife's joint contribution to the war effort can be ascertained from a newspaper article entitled 'Weather Watcher',[10] which described how his weather reports were fed hourly to the Air Ministry until 10pm each day in the Southern Pennines area. These war reports, on the Air Ministry's secret list, originated from Station 312, which was in fact Morris' personal meteorology station located at home in his garden. It was one of the highest stations above sea level and his wife, Edith, took over responsibility for recording observations and issuing reports when her husband was away. The TCO's publications were discontinued during the war and were replaced after the war with a brief four-page annual summary which continued until 1980.

On the 3 July 1952 in an interview, Morris Bower imparted advice for the public on risk limitation during thunderstorms which included hints such as keeping all windows and doors closed and not fiddling with the radio.[11] He also tells readers not to stand out in open fields or under isolated trees but to shelter in woods; that ash and elm trees are treacherous; oak is especially susceptible to lightning and sheltering under a beech tree is the best option.[12]

On 29 December 1981, Morris' wife, Edith, died and with it the support and encouragement to carry on. Morris died on 2nd August 1982 and his work was taken over by the Tornado and Storm Research Organisation (TORRO). His observatory continued to be used by colleagues until 1998.[13]

Bower may never have truly understood at the outset of his data collection how his amateur passion for thunderstorms would lead to the establishment of a national system of data collection that would not only aid the war effort but would also yield wide-ranging, unforeseen benefits and applications. The insurance industry turned to Morris' data to verify whether a storm had taken place and to confirm lightning strike claims were not fraudulent.[14] His data was used by holiday makers to inform them of the best places to go, with a low likelihood of storms. In Bower's own words, his

[9] 'Checking Up Thunderstorms', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 25 July 1936, p. 7.
[10] 'Weather Watcher', *Yorkshire Evening Post* ,12 August 1946, p. 3.
[11] 'Storm Behaviour', *Yorkshire Evening Post,* 3 July 1952, p. 8.
[12] 'They Map the Storms', *Dundee Courier and Advertiser*, 5 April 1935, p. 8.
[13] 'West Yorkshire Weather', WYAS, Retrieved from:
https://fusiontables.google.com/DataSource?dsrcid=248267, on 10/03/2018.
[14] '14 Years of Thunderstorms', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 27 June 1939, p. 6.

thunderstorm data, 'can alter a plane's course, change a farmer's mind on what to do that day, send a fishing cobble scurrying for Harbour, lead a master mariner to take his ship further offshore, or postpone a washing day.'

Samuel Morris Bower and his wife, Edith, laid the foundations for the study of thunderstorms. This article pays tribute to their incredible work in the hope that it will be recorded for posterity and inspire amateurs everywhere to pursue their interests. You never know where they may lead.

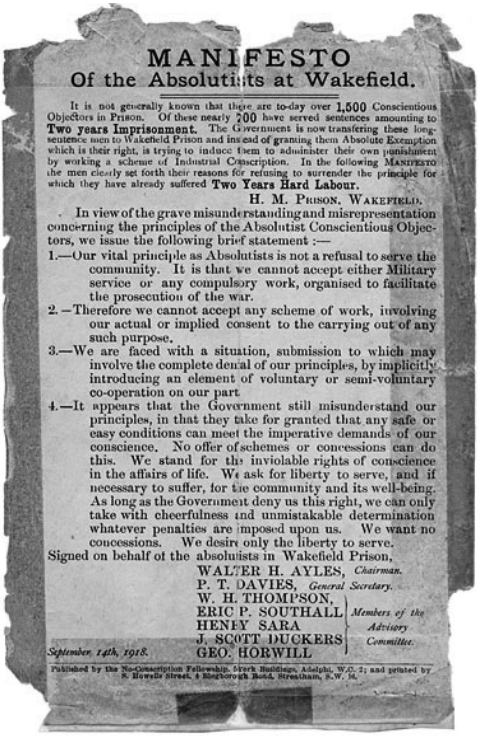
**Biography**

Cheryl, a graduate of Modern Languages and Matthew Toomey, a fellow of the Institute of Chemical Engineers, first met in 1978 and have been married for thirty-seven years. They have three grown up children and two grandchildren. Currently living in the Scottish Borders, their mutual love of history and specifically local, social and philatelic history has led to a number of interesting projects and discoveries over the years. This article on Morris Bower was written and researched as a joint project but was especially interesting because of family connections to the area. Matthew was born and brought up in Huddersfield until the age of 10 and at the time his father Jim Toomey, was a school master at King James Grammar School in Almondbury. A keen archaeologist, Jim was a founder member and secretary of the Huddersfield and District Archaeological Society. He directed excavations at Castle Hill and other locations including the Roman fort at Slack. Matthew's mother and late father both remembered Mr Bower and spoke of him cheerily as something of a local character. Bower's childhood hobby and subsequent passion for his subject not only laid the foundations for a new area of study that has had a global reach but also has particular poignancy, given today's climatic uncertainties.

# THE HUDDERSFIELD COCKNEY

## Chris Dixon

More than five months after the armistice of 11 November 1918 almost a thousand of Britain's 'Absolutists' conscientious objectors remained in prison. One of them was William Dixon. He was eventually freed on 8 April 1919, having spent almost 3 years incarcerated in conditions which were unbelievably harsh. During all this time he never wavered in the slightest from his firm conviction that the war had been wrong and that he would have nothing to do with it. This article concerns his life, and covers his experiences as a conscientious objector (CO) and his remarkable career after his release from prison.



MANIFESTO
Of the Absolutists at Wakefield.

It is not generally known that there are to-day over 1,500 Conscientious Objectors in Prison. Of these nearly 700 have served sentences amounting to **Two years Imprisonment.** The Government is now transfering these long-sentence men to Wakefield Prison and instead of granting them Absolute Exemption which is their right, is trying to induce them to administer their own punishment by working a scheme of Industrial Conscription. In the following MANIFESTO the men clearly set forth their reasons for refusing to surrender the principle for which they have already suffered **Two Years Hard Labour.**

H. M. PRISON, WAKEFIELD.

In view of the grave misunderstanding and misrepresentation concerning the principles of the Absolutist Conscientious Objectors, we issue the following brief statement :—

1.—Our vital principle as Absolutists is not a refusal to serve the community. It is that we cannot accept either Military service or any compulsory work, organised to facilitate the prosecution of the war.

2.—Therefore we cannot accept any scheme of work, involving our actual or implied consent to the carrying out of any such purpose.

3.—We are faced with a situation, submission to which may involve the complete denial of our principles, by implicitly introducing an element of voluntary or semi-voluntary co-operation on our part.

4.—It appears that the Government still misunderstand our principles, in that they take for granted that any safe or easy conditions can meet the imperative demands of our conscience. No offer of schemes or concessions can do this. We stand for the inviolable rights of conscience in the affairs of life. We ask for liberty to serve, and if necessary to suffer, for the community and its well-being. As long as the Government deny us this right, we can only take with cheerfulness and unmistakable determination whatever penalties are imposed upon us. We want no concessions. We desire only the liberty to serve.

Signed on behalf of the absolutists in Wakefield Prison,

WALTER H. AYLES, *Chairman.*
P. T. DAVIES, *General Secretary.*
W. H. THOMPSON,
ERIC P. SOUTHALL, *Members of the Advisory Committee.*
HENRY SARA
J. SCOTT DUCKERS
GEO. HORWILL

*September 14th, 1918.*

Published by the No-Conscription Fellowship, 3 York Buildings, Adelphi, W.C. 2; and printed by S. Howells Street, 4 Bloxborough Road, Streatham, S.W. 16.

The Absolutist's Manifesto.
Photograph: Author's own

There had been widespread opposition to the war and to conscription in many parts of Britain, especially in the North of England, but nowhere was this opposition more evident than in Huddersfield. At least 120 of the town's eligible young men refused to do military service. Among them there were those prepared to help the war effort as non-combatants or in humanitarian work. Others were happy to engage in war-essential work which was not under military direction and the rest simply refused all co-operation with the military. Most of these found their way, after courts martial and prison, into work camps in former prisons – Dartmoor, Wakefield, Knutsford and Warwick. But the really hard core, the 'Absolutists' refused even these work schemes. They were categorically against the war and were unprepared to perform any sort of work which might directly or indirectly aid the war effort.

Among the most outspoken and militant of Huddersfield's war resisters were George Thomas, the editor of the local labour and socialist newspaper *The Worker*, and his

chief reporter William Lawrence Dixon. Originally from the East End of London, Dixon, the subject of this article, was one of Huddersfield's more determined COs and one of its nine Absolutists.

Dixon had had a hard start in life. Born on 5 May 1893 in Shoreditch, East London, his father, John, was a printer by trade but a hard drinker by habit, with most of his wages being converted to whisky. William went to various schools and was probably bullied. He remembered his father's ill treatment of his mother, being knocked about himself, and frequently going without food during his school life. When he was about 6 years old, William was taken by his mother onto her lap and she said to him: 'Willie, you must promise me that you will never, never drink whisky'. The small boy gave her his solemn promise.

At the time the school leaving age was 14 and William would have been due to leave school in May 1907 but stayed on at his own request for a few months – spending most of that time writing. His school master, 'a thoroughly good fellow', suggested a clerical occupation but after leaving school he drifted into the first opening which presented itself which was as a delivery boy for an oil and colour merchant in Clerkenwell. But he was dismissed after a few months, and the history of his employment over the next few years told a not dissimilar story. He seemed to be argumentative, and rather a rebellious employee and was often dismissed for his attitude or unreliability – sometimes just walking out of a job after a row.

When his father abandoned the family in 1909, William and his mother were left to fend for themselves. William was able to find some heavy manual work in December 1909 but in the following summer he suffered a poisoned leg which led to his hospitalisation for about 7 months. Whilst in the infirmary, a friend lent him a book. This was 'Pitman's Shorthand Teacher'. His fascination with the subject and his admiration for its inventor were to become the bases of his livelihood for the rest of his years.

When he recovered he continued to work in the printing industry and found employment as a Bookbinder's Flush Hand, but he was again miserably treated and his fury with the way manual workers were treated sowed the seeds of his socialist views. He was once sacked for reading a pamphlet on Karl Marx instead of doing his work. After being dismissed for 'the umpteenth time' he was determined to find an office job and in 1914 he saw an opening in an advertisement for a reporter for a local newspaper called *The Worker* in Huddersfield. To his 'great and overabounding joy' he was accepted and on 15 August 1914, he travelled north to Huddersfield to take up his new position.

Dixon described George Thomas, the editor of *The Worker*, as 'the first sympathetic employer I had ever had'. Despite Dixon's lack of experience, he was sent to report on an open air meeting the following day, under George's watchful eye. Having made a success of this, he was given work reporting from the police court. George Thomas was a socialist and fiercely left wing. Under his influence, William Dixon became a committed socialist and a member of the Independent Labour Party. In Huddersfield he threw himself into the political life of the town. Not only did he report on various public meetings, but he was a regular public speaker at 'The Huddersfield and County Forum' (a sort of debating society). He gave talks entitled 'What is Progress?', 'The Proposed Labour Party' and 'Should the War be Stopped' between February 1915 and January 1916.

William Lawrence Dixon in Huddersfield. Photograph: Author's own

At the outbreak of war, *The Worker* had, through its editor George Thomas and chief reporter William Dixon, spearheaded Huddersfield's opposition to the war and was outspoken in its criticisms of the government. At first, the government hoped that the armed forces could be adequately populated by volunteers and by January 1915 more than a million volunteers had signed up. But this was 'contemptibly small' in the words of Kaiser Wilhelm whose army at the time numbered four million. For this reason, in early 1916 the Military Service Act was passed in parliament. This introduced compulsory conscription for all single men under the age of 41. The Act did establish military tribunals to which men wishing to be exempt could apply with conscientious or religious objections being possibly valid. Hundreds of thousands applied for exemption but virtually all applicants were given just a few minutes to argue their case and in the vast majority of occasions the applications were refused.

As Absolutists, Dixon and Thomas refused to accept the validity of the Military Service Act, and therefore rejected the tribunals which it established. They ignored their call-up papers and continued with their journalistic work until they were arrested. In front of the magistrates on 1 July 1916, charged as an absentee, Dixon pleaded not guilty. Upon being asked the reason he responded:

> My answer is my total opposition to militarism, Mr Chairman…. My broad reason, as a worker, for refusing to enlist is that the war was not a workers' matter in its origin, it has not been a workers' matter in its conduct and it will not be a workers' matter in its settlement. Whoever wins the war they will lose, unless they revolt against the entire domination of military or governing cliques. I want to assert here my entire detestation of the whole business of militarism – the Military Service Acts, the tribunals and the whole thing. The only people who are going to get anything out of this war and benefit from conscription are yourselves [indicating the magistrates], the propertied classes and profit-mongering people. I shall have nothing to do with it, and you can do as you damned well like.

He was fined £2 and handed over to a military escort. Upon arrival at his barracks, Dixon refused to submit to a medical examination, refused to wear a uniform and ignored all other orders. He was therefore Court-Martialled (5 July 1916) and sentenced to 16 weeks' imprisonment with hard labour at Armley Prison in Leeds. Life in prison for conscientious objectors like William Dixon was far from easy. He spent most of the time in a solitary cell with a hard board for a bed, no heating, and woefully inadequate food. He was not allowed to communicate with other prisoners and had few permitted visits. Punishments for disobedience (frequent) were reduction of rations to bread and water and total solitary confinement.

On his release, having completed his first sentence he was returned to his unit, but absconded and was immediately arrested for desertion (9 October 1916). After absconding, he had made no attempt to hide but returned to work and just waited for the police to re-arrest him – even writing to the police to tell them when and where he would be. On 14 October, he again appeared before the magistrates but this time he had an interesting defence.

In an attempt to reduce the growing number of COs in prison, Absolutists were offered 'Work of National Importance' on what was known as the Home Office Scheme, such as road building, quarry work or hard manual work in farms. The conditions were harsh, but better than those suffered by convicts. Those eligible were classified as 'Section W cases'. Dixon argued that as he had been offered such work, he was therefore to be considered under civil rather than military control and the magistrates had no jurisdiction to hand him back to the military. His case, and the way he presented it, was worthy of a lawyer, yet William Dixon was just a 23-year-old with a poor education, a shocking start in life, and his hopes of improving his life shattered by the prospect of this war. But his arguments were rejected, he was convicted of desertion and handed over to his unit. He immediately absconded again and when re-arrested was again Court Martialled (23 October, 1916) and this time sentenced to 2 years' hard labour (later commuted to 18 months). He started this

sentence in Wormwood Scrubs Prison in London but was later transferred to Wandsworth, Hull and Birmingham prisons.

In April 1917 he was able to communicate an article for *The Worker* which he entitled 'The Conscience Revolt'. His comment about his treatment in prison was: 'My only complaint, apart from that of injustice, is of a pabulary insufficiency'. Whilst in prison in Hull and Birmingham, Dixon edited and produced a 'newspaper'. It was called *The Literary Outlet* and was written with smuggled pencil lead on toilet paper. It was then covertly transferred from prisoner to prisoner during the rare exercise periods. According to Peter Brock in his book *Against the Draft*, it was 'neatly produced, with artistic coverings, and a number of illustrations scattered through it. It featured a series of articles on Socialism'.[1] Little text from this periodical remains but this is an example:

*CAUTION! DANGER FOR C.O.s!*

*On release, beware of retaining prison habits, and remember:*

*When invited out to dinner, DON'T demand to have your bread weighed. They may not have scales handy.*

*DON'T keep one handkerchief a whole week. They are not rationed outside.*

*No more free travelling. When journeying by rail, DON'T forget your ticket. You will only get back here in drab otherwise.*

*DON'T wash your tablecloth in the bath – it dirties the water so.*

*When visited by ladies, DON'T have a policeman present, or a long table between the fair ones and yourself.*

*DON'T wear your address on your jacket. You may be taken for a cabby or a hawker.*

*DON'T wink instead of saying 'How-dye-do?' Nice people will not understand sufficiently and nasty ones will understand too much.*

*DON'T get up at 5.30 a.m., for if you were meant to get up the sun would be shining.*

*DON'T put blacklead pencils into the seams of your waistcoat, or put newspapers down your socks. You'll find a pocket in a civilian coat.*

*DON'T knock on a wall with a spoon. That will not please that kind of neighbour.*

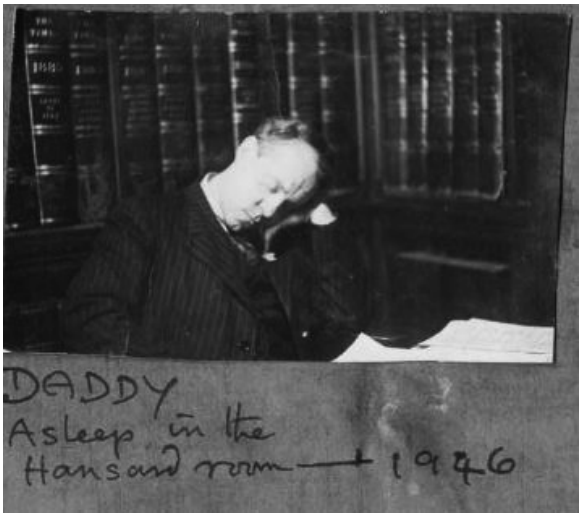
[1] Peter Brock, *Against the Draft*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, p. 225.

Emily Faulkner, nee Dyson in 1917

Dixon was released in March 1918, but he again refused to obey orders, was again Court-Martialled, and again sentenced to 2 years' hard labour. The government once more tried a scheme of 'softer' imprisonment for long term COs. This was called the 'Wakefield Scheme' and took place in Wakefield Prison. The extreme Absolutists (including William Dixon) refused to co-operate and attempted to explain their misunderstood principles by issuing this manifesto (reproduced above).

After his eventual release, William Dixon returned to Huddersfield but as *The Worker* was no longer being published, he needed urgently to find some work. George Thomas had eventually co-operated with the Home Office Scheme and the two had lost contact. However, Dixon had returned to the first love of his life Emily Faulkner, whom he had met soon after arriving in Huddersfield. Reunited, they eventually married in September 1920 in Lincoln. Between his release and then, Dixon had lived for short periods in Widnes, Wrexham and Lincoln – taking whatever journalistic jobs as were available.

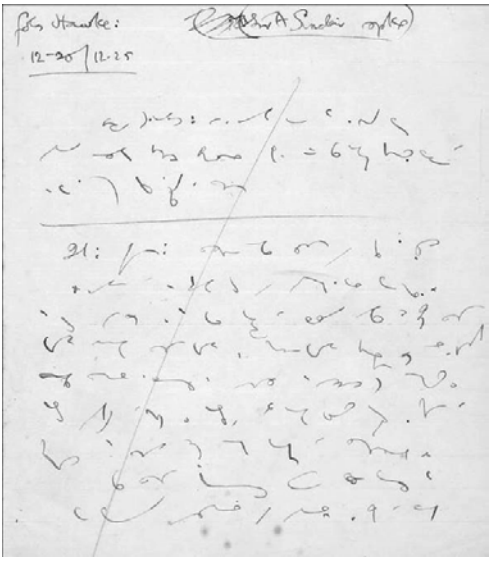
Whilst working for the Lincolnshire Echo in early 1921 William Dixon had his first big break. He received a communication from his old friend George Thomas who told him that a job was available on a national daily newspaper in London. This was *The Daily Herald* which was a strongly left-wing newspaper supporting, and supported by, the Labour Party. It had opposed the war and conscription and was therefore sympathetic to released COs.




William Dixon in 1946. Photograph: Author's own

William and Emily and her two daughters moved to London and he took up his new position. Because of his keen interest in politics, he soon became the parliamentary reporter for *The Daily Herald* working in the Press Gallery in the House of Commons. Taking notes of the speeches as they happened was relatively easy for Dixon because he had not lost his shorthand skills. He could not have failed to notice (and become acquainted with) the Hansard reporters in the gallery. Hansard reporters were required to record every single word and therefore shorthand speed and accuracy were paramount. The job seemed ideal for Dixon and when an opportunity arose in 1933, he applied for a position and was accepted. He remained in this post for the next 26 years until his retirement in 1959 (aged 66). He was thus at work on Sunday 3 September 1939 when Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain informed the House of the declaration of war with Germany. His original shorthand notebook containing the record of those speeches is now in the possession of the Archive Department of the Houses of Parliament.

William Dixon's marriage to Emily broke up in 1931 and shortly afterwards he married Joyce Large, the daughter of a Labour Party activist and speech writer. They had three children, the eldest of whom was named 'William Keir' (after the first Labour MP Keir Hardie). Dickie and Joyce (by now, William Lawrence Dixon was universally known as 'Dickie') had a rather tempestuous relationship which endured until about 1939. At this time Dickie was living in a large house in South London which he owned. Just after the outbreak of war, a German refugee by the name of Alice Bondy asked for accommodation and work as a housekeeper. By 1941 Dickie and Alice had formed a relationship which led to marriage and four children and lasted for the rest of his life until 1979 when he died, aged 86.



Facsimile of original shorthand of Churchill's speech. Author's own

He never lost his love for shorthand, his love of music, his love of photography, his love for his wife Alice or his love for his 7 children. He was determined to do more for his children than his father had ever done for him. His son David showed musical talents at an early age and Dickie secured a place for him at St Paul's Cathedral Choir School as a member of which David sang in the coronation service of Queen Elizabeth II. His

youngest son was sent to a first-class school (Dulwich College) and Dickie secured for him a position as an articled clerk with Sir Barnett Janner, a Labour MP and prominent London solicitor.

Dickie's political beliefs did change, however. During the 1939-45 conflict he served as an Air Raid Warden and his political persuasion became more and more right-wing. He was a staunch Conservative for the last 30 years of his life.

However, he never once drank whisky!

**Biography**

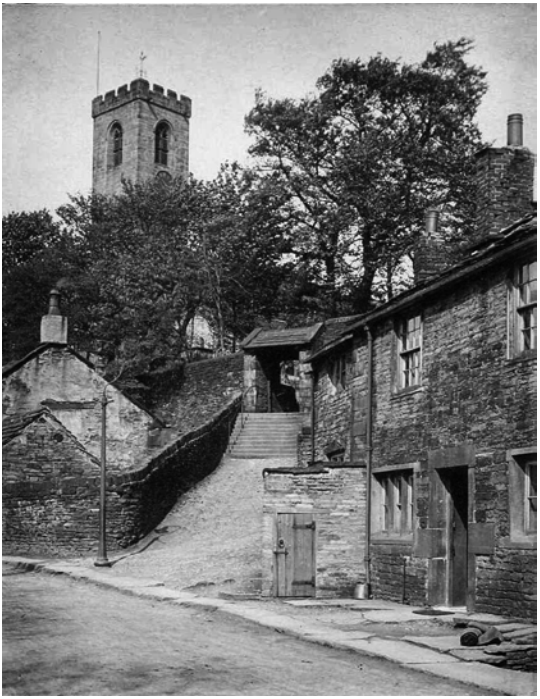
Born in November 1944, I am not a professional writer neither am I a historian. After a legal training, I became a businessman with a Computer Software Company, I am an amateur musician, an adventurer (having visited both the North and South Poles). I have been a magistrate and I now live in retirement in Bath with my wife Jan where we care for a herd of alpacas. My knowledge of William Lawrence Dixon is derived from the fact that I am his youngest son (the one articled to Barnett Janner). I am familiar with Pitman's shorthand (but not to my father's elevated standard).

**Acknowledgements**

The information in this article has been drawn from William Lawrence Dixon's diaries and his own writings about his early life. Other information came from my own recollections of my life at home with my father and his stories about his experiences. Notably, my father was reticent about his experiences during the 1914-18 war. For much of the information about this period I am indebted to the considerable research undertaken by Cyril Pearce and his informative book *Comrades in Conscience* from which I learned new facts about my father's early life.

# W. H. SIKES, PHOTOGRAPHER OF HISTORIC HUDDERSFIELD

**Peter Burton**



Kirkburton, Huddersfield in the 1920s. Photo by W. H. Sikes. Courtesy of Kirklees

Throughout that tumultuous period that bridged the Victorian era and the modern technological world of the late 1930s, a retired Almondbury woollen manufacturer, William Henry Sikes, was recording with his camera the old buildings of Huddersfield, many of which would soon be swept away and lost forever.

W. H. Sikes spent many days out in the field with his camera documenting the villages, lanes and landscapes surrounding Huddersfield and especially their historic buildings. His keen eye and his knowledge of the surroundings always meant he selected the most suitable and interesting viewpoint from which to take his pictures. His meticulous planning usually meant the direction of light was carefully considered to allow his subject to be photographed in the best conditions.

The author of this article, whilst working as a volunteer for the Kirklees Museum Service cataloguing their archive of historic building photographs, noted that the name of this photographer seemed to dominate the collection. His photographs were not only of a high technical standard but the historic buildings he photographed were chosen with care, either because of their architectural significance or because of their cultural value. Many of the buildings he photographed were on the verge of being demolished in the name of progress, such as single storey worker's cottages or timber framed agricultural barns. He took an equal interest in them all whether the most humble cottage or the grandest mansion. His main period of activity in recording the historic buildings of Huddersfield was between 1907-1925, a time that

The Clerk's House, Almondbury, during demolition, December 1906. Photo by W. H. Sikes. Courtesy of Kirklees Museums & Galleries

largely preceded the opening of the Tolson Museum in 1922, but we know he was an active photographer from at least 1894.[1]

In addition to the inherent interest in the buildings themselves, William Henry Sikes' photographs each had a record card giving some relevant details of the pictures. These record cards, supplied as printed templates by the Tolson Museum, were completed in his own neat handwriting. Information on the cards included the date the photograph was taken, the negative number from Sikes' own filing system, a description of the content of the image and, where appropriate, some historical detail about the building concerned.

The range and quantity of his work and the contribution he has made to the recording of our often-vanished building history raised an interest in who this man was. The article that follows tries to give substance to W. H. Sikes, photographer, from Almondbury.

William Henry Sikes was born on 2 September 1854, the son of Henry and Mary Sikes of Sharpe House, Almondbury. By the time of the 1861 and 1871 census, William, then aged 6 and 16 respectively, was living with his parents at the large mill-owners house called Rushfield House in Almondbury. Their house was near Rushfield Mill where William's father was in a woollen business partnership under the title of Sikes and Hanson Ltd.

In his youth William appears to have worked as a trainee in his father's business, learning the various skills needed as a woollen manufacturer. His occupations noted on census records in his early years include Woollen Dealer and Warehouseman. When Henry Sikes died in 1894 much of his estate, including his textile business in Almondbury, passed to his eldest son William Henry Sikes, who continued his father's business trading under his father's name for a while. The inheritance included the family home of Doe Royd in Almondbury where they had moved in 1878 although William's unmarried sister, Hannah Maria Sikes, would continue to live at Doe Royd for the rest of her life.

[1] He kept meticulous records including the date each photograph was taken.

The Huddersfield Naturalist and Photographic Society meeting at Fenay Royd, 1911. Photo by W. H. Sikes. Courtesy of Kirklees Museums & Galleries

It would appear that a few years prior to his father's death William had established his own textile business in Almondbury. In the census of 1891, when William was 36 years old, he recorded his occupation as Cashmere Manufacturer. This venture may have been financed by an inheritance of money and property he received from his uncle, Sir Charles Sikes who had died in 1889.[2] William was also at this time landlord of a number of rented properties, the owner of several acres of agricultural land within Almondbury and had other business interests as well. By the 1911 census aged 57, William described himself as a Retired Cashmere Manufacturer. The income from these various sources no doubt afforded him a comfortable life allowing the time to devote to his personal interests of natural history, archaeology and photography.

William Henry Sikes was a member of the Huddersfield Naturalist and Photographic Society (HNPS) from at least 1893, with his sister, Hannah Maria Sikes, joining him in the society as a new member in 1896.[3] From 1911-1913 William became the treasurer of the society and then from 1914 until his death he served as one of the

[2] Sir Charles Sikes was a successful Huddersfield banker, knighted for his work in establishing the Post Office Savings Bank. He was unmarried but had several brothers and sisters and nephews and nieces. William Henry Sikes, the son of Sir Charles' brother Henry, inherited the lion's share of his estate including properties within Pack Horse Yard in Huddersfield and elsewhere.

[3] See the large archive of Annual Reports and other material relating to the society and its members held in Huddersfield Library Local Studies collection.

vice-presidents. The society held many of its annual meetings during this period at the Almondbury home of William Henry Sikes at Fenay Royd, a large country villa, well capable of accommodating a group in some comfort. In 1911 during one of these annual meetings at Fenay Royd, it was agreed that a new branch of the society specialising in archaeology and history be formed and this was to be called the Antiquarian Section. This new section would supplement the existing Naturalist and Photography sections and William Henry Sikes was asked to sit on its committee. This committee would also include Dr T. W. Woodhead and the members had elected Mr J. H. Carter as its first secretary.[4] The inaugural field trip of the new section was on 8 June 1912 when they visited Almondbury Church to study its antiquities with the tour being led by W. H. Sikes himself.

William Henry Sikes in the uniform of the Volunteer Force during WW1. Private Collection.

It is highly likely that William was instrumental in the formation of this new Antiquarian Section as he was greatly involved in the photography of archaeological excavations at this time. His photographs of pre-historic sites and excavated objects such as flint tools, pottery and arrowheads from Pule Hill and other sites in Marsden are all taken during the period 1911-1932 and held in the Tolson Museum Collection.[5] The growing interest in history, or antiquarianism as they termed it, for many members of the society meant that the more general subject themes of naturalist studies or photography didn't sufficiently cater for the interests of these members. It was for this reason in 1911 that the society was finally renamed the Huddersfield Naturalist, Photographic and Antiquarian Society, the title it retained until its closure in 1949.

[4] HNPS Annual Report 1911-12; Thomas William Woodhead worked at Huddersfield Technical College and was instrumental in establishing the Tolson Museum in Huddersfield. See Damian Hughes' PhD thesis, *Natural Visions, Photography and ecological knowledge 1895-1939, retrieved from:* https://www.dora.dmu.ac.uk/handle/2086/13307 on A short biography of TW Woodhead can be found on Huddersfield Exposed website.

[5] Stored in the Huddersfield University Heritage Quay Archives, under the heading of W. H. Sikes Collection, with many viewable on-line at the Kirklees Image Archive.

The Woolpack Inn, Almondbury, decorated for the coronation of King George V, in June 1911. Photo by W. H. Sikes. Courtesy of Kirklees Museums & Galleries

William Henry Sikes' photographic skills were becoming recognised by several local authors and scientific friends and he was asked to illustrate a number of important publications of the time. These included *The Study of Plants – an introduction to Botany and Plant Ecology* by his friend Dr T. W. Woodhead and published in 1915 by Oxford Clarendon Press. This book contained photographs taken by William of plant specimens and local botanical landscapes. In 1924 a book published in the Tolson Museum Handbook Series entitled *Early Man in the District of Huddersfield* by James A. Petch, includes in the preface an appreciation of William's work thus: 'The illustrations are due largely to Mr WH Sikes who devoted many years to the task of a photographic record.' The photographs for this book include flint tools and excavation sites. A lovely large format pictorial paper-backed book entitled *Bits of Old Almondbury* was published in the early twentieth century and contains several photographs of historic Almondbury taken by William. These include the Old Pent House, Fenay Hall and Weavers Cottages at Lumb amongst a number of other buildings.[6]

William also gave regular illustrated lectures to the members of the HNPS and he appears once or twice every year in the society's *Syllabus* of events during the 1900s. His most ambitious lectures seem to have been given during the 1918-19 season when the First World War was at its height and by which time William had enrolled into the local Volunteer Force, a forerunner of the Home Guard. It was during this same period, on 24 October 1918, that he gave a lantern-slide lecture to the society called 'The Manor of Almondbury' and on 25 January 1919 he gave another called 'Woodsome and its Surroundings'.[7] For both of these lectures William had undertaken extensive research on the subjects to be presented. The lecture notes, carefully typed by William and bound into volumes, along with many fine photographs only a small percentage of which were used in the lectures themselves, are all preserved in the Tolson Museum Archive of historic photographs.

[6] A copy is in Kirklees WYAS Archives, WYK1732/5. The book also includes a number of sketches of Almondbury scenes by W Foxley Norris, Dean of Westminster. The book is undated and may have been privately published by W. H. Sikes himself.

[7] See the Annual Report for 1918-19 of the HNPS where a description of W. H. Sikes' lectures is summarised in the annual review of the Antiquarian Section.

The wide range of interests that Sikes followed with his photographic recording campaigns can be gauged by the subjects he lectured on to the HNPS, which were always illustrated by his own lantern-slides. In November 1911 he presented an 'Exhibition of Radiographs of Shells and Photomicrographs' along with a colleague in the society, H. G. Brierley.[8] In 1912 he lectured on 'The Earthworks of Castle Hill' in collaboration with Dr Woodhead and in the same year gave an illustrated talk on 'Saxon Crosses found in the neighbourhood of Huddersfield'. In 1916, again with Dr Woodhead, he gave a talk entitled 'Some Local Pre-Norman Remains' that William illustrated with his photographs showing the 'archaeological treasures' to be found in the wider area of Huddersfield and beyond. Other talks included 'The Origin of the Huddersfield Flora' once more with Dr Woodhead in 1918.

Cruck Barn at Upper Oldfield, Honley, 1928. Photo by W. H. Sikes. Courtesy of Kirklees Museums & Galleries

William was a key member of the society over a long period and there are many references to his photographic work contained within their annual reports. In these it was frequently noted that he supplied photographs not only for his own lectures but for other members of the society too. In the 1914-15 Annual Report mention is made that W. H. Sikes has 'again, undertaken the work of photographing the excavations on behalf of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society'. This suggests a long-term endeavour and is also evidence that he was working with other groups of historians and archaeologists beyond those of the HNPS. William travelled widely to photograph historic buildings and antiquities. Series taken in distant areas of Yorkshire, far beyond Huddersfield, in Scotland, Wales, Cornwall and many other places show his wide scope of interest.

Sikes used a variety of cameras during his life. Many of the original negatives from his collection have survived and from these we can see the camera formats that he was using.[9] His most frequently employed camera used a glass plate size of 4¼" x 3¼"

[8] This is the first reference to W. H. Sikes lectures and is an unusual subject for him. Photomicrographs are photographs taken through a microscope and we know that William possessed a high quality brass microscope, now in the possession of his great-granddaughter Judith Thatcher. Radiographs are images taken using x-rays to show, in this case, the beautiful internal structures of sea shells. It isn't known if the radiographs were created by William or his colleague but he certainly made lantern slides of the radiographs as these are contained within his archive of negatives.

[9] Stored in Huddersfield University Heritage Quay Archive under W. H. Sikes Collection. The negatives are mostly glass plates and each one is stored in its individual paper envelope. Typed carefully onto the envelope by William himself is a description of the image with date taken and technical processing

(known as quarter-plate) that provided a good compromise between quality of image and portability of equipment. He also used a much larger sized camera taking 6½" x 4¾" glass plates (known as half-plate) for the highest quality images. He was in addition a frequent user of a stereo-pair camera that was quite a specialist piece of equipment in its day. This camera took a pair of 3¼" x 3¼" square images at the same time, so that when the pair of photographs were viewed through a special stereo viewer it gave a 3-D image. This plate size is also that used for the 'lantern slides' that William used to illustrate the lectures he gave to the HNPS. His original negatives include technical details of developing processes and it is highly likely that he would have had a darkroom at his home at Fenay Royd for developing and printing his photographs. His will, drawn up a few years before his death in 1934, lists amongst his possessions a 'workshop and contents' at Fenay Royd which he bequeathed to his daughter, and might be a reference to his photographic darkroom.

William and his wife Anne were both in their 30s when they married at Christ Church, Moldgreen, Huddersfield, in 1886. They had two children but suffered the loss of a baby who only survived for one month. Their other child, Winifred Mary, lived into old age and died in 1969 aged 76. Anne, William's wife, died before him in February 1920 and he paid to have a memorial erected in her memory in All Hallows Church, Almondbury. William himself died fourteen years later in June 1934 aged 79 and is also buried in All Hallows churchyard. He built their family home, Fenay Royd in Almondbury, in 1894 on farmland that he purchased for the purpose two years previously. He and Anne lived there until the end of their lives with his estate passing to their daughter Winifred and her husband Harold (Jim) Inman. William Henry Sikes' main legacy to the people of Huddersfield, however, is his magnificent collection of historic photographs numbering over 7,000 images now safely archived in the collection of the Tolson Museum. Many of them can be viewed on-line at the Kirklees Image Archive.[10]

**Acknowledgments**.

Many people have helped with the research for this article. The staff of Kirklees Museum Service at the Tolson Museum have been helpful and generous in allowing the publication of images from the W. H. Sikes archive, but particularly Frances Stonehouse for her encouragement. Staff at the Huddersfield Library Local Studies Collection and their colleagues from West Yorkshire Archive Service in the room next

information such as type of developing solution used and processing time. The negatives, from the sample viewed, are all processed expertly and show no signs of discolouration or fading. The cataloguing and storage system employed by W. H. Sikes reveals a very meticulous approach. The earliest negative in the collection is dated 1907.

[10] www.kirkleesimages.org.uk Some 3,600 of his images have been digitised and posted to this site but under a misspelled surname of Sykes instead of Sikes. Currently, a search for 'William Sykes' should bring up the collection.

door have all been helpful, as have been the staff at Huddersfield University Heritage Quay where the W. H. Sikes/Tolson Museum image archive is stored. Judith Thatcher, great-granddaughter of W. H. Sikes, has been very generous with information on their family history and legacy items in her possession. To them all and to numerous others not mentioned here, I extend my thanks.

**Biographical details**

Peter Burton is a resident of the Holme Valley and has a wide interest in local history. He has published an earlier article in the HLHS *Journal* (Issue no. 25 2014/15) on the medieval Holme Valley.

Peter can be contacted by e-mail: peter100cars@outlook.com

# DEDICATED TO SERVICE - EMILY FRANCES SIDDON (1844-1923)

## Peter Marshall

A celebration of the extraordinary women of our burgh was held in August 2018 when three of the most noted were the subject of a series of talks at Huddersfield Library. One of these women was Miss Emily Frances Siddon, who gave service to her community almost unequalled before or since. She espoused causes which might have seemed unpopular and even began a movement which was devoted to establishing the rights of children.

Miss Siddon in the early twentieth century. Image courtesy of Honley Civic Society archive

Emily Frances Siddon was born on 16 April 1844 at Pleasley near Mansfield, the youngest of three. Her father Samuel was a cotton mill owner and local squire, but it was her mother, Sarah, who had links to West Yorkshire, being the daughter of John Jessop, a drysalter, who built and lived in Honley House. Siddon's early life was beset by tragedy. The death of her father while she was still quite young, left her mother to look after three children. However, the family was not without means, having five servants and a governess at West Bank, their Mansfield home.

A second tragedy befell the young Emily Frances when her mother died in 1862. She was just 17 and, being short of her majority, she came to live in Honley House with her mother's brother, George Jessop. When she moved north, Siddon brought with her an interest in workhouses and the conditions of their residents. Her uncle George died in 1868 as did two of his sons around the same time, leaving a third, Emily's cousin Thomas, a lifelong soldier who spent most of his life in the army or living in London. Honley House was thereby left for the use of Miss Siddon, although it remained the property of the Jessops. When Thomas died in 1913, he left her £10,000 and the use of Honley House until she should marry. She was by then 69 years old. She settled quickly into Honley and went on to play a significant part in the life of her community. At the age of 26, she was to be found living at Honley House with her long-term companion Sarah Brooke, a member of the mill-owning Honley family. Also resident were three servants, whom she had brought from Mansfield.

Siddon entered public life representing Honley ratepayers on the Local Board (a form of local government) in 1882, following in the footsteps of her late cousin George Jessop junior. Her name was also recommended for one of two seats to represent the village on the Huddersfield Board of Guardians in April that year. The Guardians were established in 1834 under the Poor Law Amendment Act, being successors to the Overseers of the Poor and responsible for all the workhouses in the Huddersfield area. When a deputation of ratepayers pressed her to stand for the election, Siddon was reluctant to have her name put forward. She let the matter rest and went on a trip abroad but while away, she received a telegram to say that someone had withdrawn her nomination. However, the withdrawal needed her signature. She wired back from 'some remote corner of Europe' as she put it, giving directions to let the matter stand and returned later to Huddersfield to find herself a much-talked about lady.

Her election was successful and although received in Huddersfield with 'mingled feelings' her appointment was reported all over the world, even as far away as Australia, she being one of only 27 women to hold such a post in England at that time. She would have been aware of the 1848 scandal, when a report on Huddersfield workhouse revealed that:

> the sick poor have been most shamefully neglected; that they have been and still are devoid of the necessary articles of clothing and bedding; that they have been suffered to remain for weeks at a time in the most filthy and disgusting state; that patients have been allowed to remain for nine weeks together without change of linen or of bed clothing: that beds in which patients suffering in typhus have died, one after another, have been again and again and repeatedly used for fresh patients, without any change or attempt at purification.[11]

Siddon made it her aim to improve these conditions, giving her time and her effort as well as monetary donations. Amongst her early work, she and Octavia Brooke, sister of Sarah, provided a 'knife and fork' tea for the residents of Deanhouse Workhouse on New Year's Day in 1889. Her cousin, Captain Thomas Jessop, donated fruit, tobacco and snuff. Siddon went on to become vice-chair of the Huddersfield Board of Guardians on three separate occasions - from 1901 to 1905, 1907 to 1913 and 1917 to 1919. She somewhat reluctantly held the post of chair during most of the Great War years.

[11] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 6 May 1848, p. 6.

Emily Frances Siddon standing at the door of Honey House with the Honley National School cricket team (c1910) and head master George Borwell standing left. Image courtesy of Honley Civic Society archive.

A notable feature of all her terms of office was her concern for pauper children. Emily Frances was instrumental in taking children out of the workhouse system and became known for the creation of separate children's homes. The Huddersfield Board of Guardians was one of the first boards in the country to do this. By the early 1900s, the Huddersfield Union had set up its first children's homes, one at 18 South Street Huddersfield and another at Outlane in August 1901. Accommodation was provided in each for ten children and a foster mother.

Later, further homes were opened in South Street and Ramsden Street, and in 1926, a development of six children's cottage homes was opened at The Leas, Scholes, near Holmfirth. The mansion house on that site was at first turned into children's accommodation shortly after Siddon's death in 1923. It later became the administrative and communal centre with the children accommodated in the new buildings around it. The resident children were permitted to attend local schools, on their own, Huddersfield being once again a pioneer.

Back in 1908 and in recognition of her work, Siddon had been presented by the Guardians with a life-size portrait, an illuminated address and a pearl and diamond pendant. In response she said,

> I think it may fairly be claimed that women's work has come to be recognised as an important and valued factor in promoting the welfare of the community.
>
> I am the gainer today, inasmuch as my long term of service as a Guardian has marked me out as an object by which to show appreciation of such services.
>
> I do not, of course, claim any credit for my work as a Guardian. The part I have taken in helping to administer the Poor-Law in this union has been a pleasure to me; I think it has been a hobby.

She then returned the portrait to be hung in the Guardian Board room.

Siddon was one of the witnesses who gave evidence before the Royal Commission on the Poor Law of 1905 and 1906. She became interested in the fight against tuberculosis and in October 1905 attended the International Congress in Paris as representative of the Huddersfield Board of Guardians. For many years she was one of the three representatives for Yorkshire on the committee of the Central Poor Law Conference and she was also a member of the Council of the Poor Law Unions Association.

On another front, she was a strong believer in women's suffrage and supported local bodies, being many years the president of the Huddersfield branch of the National Union of Suffrage Societies. She gave support to Millicent Fawcett when the women's suffrage campaigner addressed a large suffragist meeting on 7 November, 1893 in the Reception Room at Huddersfield Town Hall. However, Siddon did not approve of the direct action of the Suffragettes, although many came from Huddersfield, indeed some from Honley. She did however join marches in London on three occasions, 1907, 1911 and 1913.

Her interest in children extended to their education as she was a governor of Almondbury Grammar School with one of the houses named after her (others were appropriately named Jessop and Brooke). She was also a governor of the Huddersfield Technical College, Sarah Brooke's brother Thomas being a founder of that institution.

Broadening her community involvement saw Siddon become a member of the Board of the Royal Infirmary and one of the founders of the Charity Organisation Society, as well as being a member of the committee of the Guild of Help, of the Deaf and Dumb Institute, a member of the committee of the Victoria Sick Poor Nurses' Association, vice-president and then president of the Huddersfield Society for the Care of

Friendless Girls. She was also interested in friendly societies' work including the Order of Foresters. For many years she was a member of the Executive of the Yorkshire Association for the Care of the Feeble-minded. Siddon's time in office was not without controversy. In 1914, she used her casting vote to permit the granting of a Christmas beer to workhouse residents, seen by many as encouraging immorality.

Being chair of the Huddersfield Board of Guardians at the outbreak of war in 1914, Siddon immediately devoted herself to various forms of war work. She helped in the early recruiting campaigns and then in organising and supporting local organisations for the supply of comforts for the servicemen and the care of wounded at home.

She was one of the initiators of a national arrangement whereby the wives and families of servicemen received immediate financial assistance pending government action on allowances rather than have to wait for the machinery of bureaucracy to grind slowly. As a supporter and administrator of auxiliary hospitals, she turned her experience to the organisation of the local war hospital. Under her chairmanship, the Huddersfield Board of Guardians also gave assistance in the local settlement of the Belgian refugees at Royd's Hall.

She offered her services to a wide range of wartime organisations. She was president of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association; vice-president of the War Pensions Committee; vice-president of the Women's Society for Helping Soldiers and Sailors, member of the Huddersfield War relief committee. Local to her home, she was president of the Honley Auxiliary Hospital Committee and a member of the Crosland Moor Hospital Committee.

Through her links with the Women's Suffrage Society, Siddon endowed a number of wartime beds with an annual donation of £50 per bed between 1915 and 1919. Her war service, particularly to the Soldiers' and Sailors' Families Association, was recognised in July 1918, when she was awarded the OBE. In addition, she received the Order of Queen Elizabeth of Belgium, for her work with Belgian refugees. In October 1920, Siddon's name was added to the roll of the Justices of Peace for the borough and so she became Huddersfield's first woman magistrate.

Throughout her life, her attention never left her home village and she remained actively interested in the affairs of Honley. She assisted in the work of the Honley Nursing Association and in work connected with Honley Parish Church. She was a manager of Honley National Schools and many local events would result in a visit to Honley House and the presentation of oranges to the children.

She was a fluent public speaker and had (it was said) a rather impish sense of humour with a childish giggle. Siddon enjoyed debate and often had a ready quip as a

response to some pompous remark. She confessed, 'I have a great aptitude for enjoyment' and when younger, she found great pleasure in travelling. Siddon had visited many places in Europe as well as the north coast of Africa including Egypt. She once expressed the view 'Travel is the best education any woman can have.'

Mary Jagger, her contemporary and Honley's historian, commented in 1914 that 'Miss Siddon has a keen sense of humour. With a hearty laugh and breezy manner, she can crack a joke with anyone'. She added, 'Miss Siddon is a born leader. When she was elected a Guardian a new element was introduced to the work of the Union, which required mental capacity, clear-headed judgement and much self-reliance to convince male members of woman's capability'.[12]

In later life, Siddon had heart trouble and bronchitis. On 28 May, 1923, the *Huddersfield Examiner* reported that she was ill. The next day's paper carried a report of her continued illness, but it was already too late as she had passed away overnight. She remained unmarried and so benefitted from the use of her family house. It was said that the death of a close friend the previous week had affected her greatly.

Emily Frances Siddon was buried in the Jessop plot in Honley graveyard on the last day of May 1923. She left an estate of nearly £25,000. Her niece paid for a brass plaque to be erected in St Mary's Church in Honley, where it can still be seen. Although she may be largely forgotten, she is still fondly remembered in Honley. There can be few today, men or women, who could equal her benevolent work.

**Biography**

Peter comes from Dundee, where he was educated at Harris Academy and St Andrews University, graduating with an MA in 1968. A lifelong enthusiasm for Scottish Railways prompted him to find out more about the early companies in his native heath in Victorian times and resulted in four substantial works published by Oakwood Press in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Having retired from a career in national retailing, he turned his interests to local history, in particular that of his adopted home village of Honley. Over the years he has written and produced many books about the history of Honley as well as producing books from other authors all for the benefit of Honley Civic Society.

[12] Mary Jagger, *The History of Honley*, Alfred Jubb and Sons, Huddersfield, p. 327.

# NOTABLE CO-OPERATOR: THOMAS HIRST 1792-1833

## John Halstead

Thomas Hirst, born in 1792 and buried at Holy Trinity Church in May 1833, was the most notable member of the Huddersfield Co-operative Trading Association founded in 1829. He was distinguished nationally as a co-operative 'missionary' and played a prominent part as Huddersfield delegate to the Co-operative Congress, especially that held at the Institution of the Industrious Classes, London, on 23 April 1832. This short article looks at his life and is followed by an account of the recent restoration of his gravestone as a consequence of its discovery by Alan Brooke.

The exact date of Hirst's birth in the French revolutionary year of 1792 is unclear, though he was baptised 'Thomas of Hannah Hirst, Bradley' on 1 April at the Huddersfield Parish Church of St Peter. As an adult, he became 'for many years a member and preacher among the New Connexion Methodists'.[1] Yet at the age of twenty-one on 6 April 1813, living in Almondbury parish, Thomas married Hannah Sykes in the Anglican church. Both parties signed the register by hand rather than by mark, so we have an indication of literacy. Moreover, the press noted at his death that he 'possessed a strong and vigorous mind' and he was among those listed at the establishment of the Huddersfield Mechanics' Institute in April 1825.[2]

Hirst's mental capability, religious conviction and politics were undoubtedly inseparable. Conclusions about religious affiliation or views cannot be drawn from appearances at Anglican churches during this period associated with Methodism at the baptism of Thomas and Hannah's first child in Huddersfield, Sarah Sykes Hirst, in the year after the marriage. The nonconformist chapel is not identified, but it was almost certainly at the Wesleyan's Queen Street where their second child, John Sykes Hirst, was baptised on 9 May 1816. The move to New Connexion Methodism probably took place sometime between 1816 and 1819. This was a disturbed period, economically and politically. Moves to New Connexion Methodism from Wesleyan Methodism had previously been associated with political radicalism and Thomas was in economic difficulty.

He was first declared bankrupt in February 1814.[3] He evidently recovered from this and apparently prospered for some time, but was again declared bankrupt in 1820.[4]

---

[1] *Manchester Times and Gazette*, Saturday, 1 June 1833.
[2] *Manchester Times and Gazette*, Saturday, 1 June 1833. For the establishment of the HMI see *Huddersfield Examiner,* 10 February 1923, a column entitled, 'Peeps into the Past: Provided by Local Pamphlets'.
[3] *Stamford Gazette*, 4 March 1814.
[4] *Bell's Weekly Messenger*, 30 October 1820. *Stamford Gazette*, 3 November 1820.

This led to the February 1821 sale of five lots freehold property. It included his own dwelling house, workshops, warehouse-room, barn, stable, garden, small croft, and two fields of about four acres. Another dwelling house, with the shops, barn, stable, garden, and three closes of land which had been occupied by Timothy Smith, was included. There was another seven and a half acres occupied by Thomas and Reverend Mr. Maddock, who would have been Henry John, first 'perpetual curate' and incumbent of Holy Trinity.[5] It was in the wake of this bankruptcy that Thomas's wife Hannah died and was buried at Holy Trinity on 21 November 1821.

Hirst's circumstances improved a year later. His second marriage, to Ann Crosland, daughter of Joseph Crosland, cloth manufacturer at Paddock, took place on 24 October. His creditors were paid off and he was released from debt in December 1822.[6] The improved economic conditions lasted in the district until the collapse of country banks in December 1825. The fancy trade in the district was particularly badly affected and there was extreme distress which lasted until at least 1833. A number of meetings in Almondbury during 1826 and 1829 pressed for relief and meetings at Huddersfield with local manufacturers employing domestic weavers were held. The creation of the Huddersfield Co-operative Trading Association (HCTA) was one response to this crisis. The HCTA, formed in order to expand the manufacture of co-operative goods, is said to be of the 'most important and influential' of thirty-eight known to have been established in West Yorkshire between 1827 and 1832. Another response was trade union activity and the formation of Political Unions to agitate for parliamentary representation.[7]

Hirst was involved in or supportive of all these moves, while most prominently associated with co-operation and, therefore, Owenite socialism. The first report of Hirst's missionary activity on behalf of co-operation appeared in September 1831. He had been on three Lancashire and North Wales tours after attending the Co-operative Congress in Manchester in May before speaking at a 'co-operative tea party' in Halifax on 24 June. Besides this, he had been lecturing at numerous places in the Huddersfield district since the Congress. The report of Hirst's missionary activity appeared in the *Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator* in the issue that first included Yorkshire in the title. It also appears to have coincided with his addition to, or assumption of, its editorship.[8]

[5] Sale details in *Leeds Intelligencer*, 29 January 1821, p. 1.
[6] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 9 December 1822, p. 1.
[7] See Robin Thornes, 'The Origins of the Co-operative Movement in Huddersfield: the Life and Times of the 1st Huddersfield Co-operative Trading Association', in E.A. Hilary Haigh (ed.), *Huddersfield. A Most Handsome Town*, Kirklees Cultural Services, Huddersfield, 1992, pp. 171-188.
[8] *Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator*, 3 September 1831. This issue was the first to appear with Yorkshire added to the title of the original *Lancashire Co-operator,* which had appeared in six issues

Hirst was also placed in the chair at a Huddersfield public meeting in September 1831. This was convened on a requisition to the constable by the town's radicals to petition Parliament to put a stop to prosecutions for theological and political opinions, the liberation of those imprisoned for offences against the Stamp Acts, and the repeal of these taxes on knowledge.[9] The unstamped press campaign supported by the Huddersfield Political Union was complementary to support for co-operation, trade unionism and political representation. Hirst's challenge to legislators during his lectures on co-operation was radical. He thought their argument that the answer to evidence of the alarming increase of pauperism and bankruptcy lay in celibacy, emigration and the construction of pauper colonies and cottages, was false: the problem was one of competition rather than population. His personal recommendation to them was the little practised text of scripture, 'as you would men do unto you, do so even to them'.[10]

There was a lull in Hirst's activity through the winter but it resumed in the new year. He spoke on co-operation alongside the Reverend C. B. Dunn of Cumberworth at a Huddersfield meeting on 19 March, where 'his powerful and popular oratory served more strongly to confirm the philosophical truths uttered by the reverend lecturer'. On the following two days he was at Halifax and Bradford, where, as one Halifax auditor testified, he made 'a considerable impression on the 'lads'' of the town.[11] He was again associated with Huddersfield political radicals at a public meeting in April on the distress of the labouring classes. His argument in moving a resolution here was that the working classes were now determined to manage their own affairs. They should therefore consider their individual weakness and, 'seeking union as a band of brothers, act to redeem themselves from slavery, their families from want, and the country from injustice and repression'.[12] This argument can be read as for co-operation of course, but also for trade unionism and political representation.

Shortly after this meeting, Hirst went to London as the HCTA delegate to the Co-operative Congress. He delivered a speech there, with Robert Owen in the chair, to other delegates and some 800 additional persons, which extolled the virtues of co-operative trading and manufacturing associations in 'peaceably uniting a great number of the industrious classes' and 'promoting co-operative knowledge'.

---

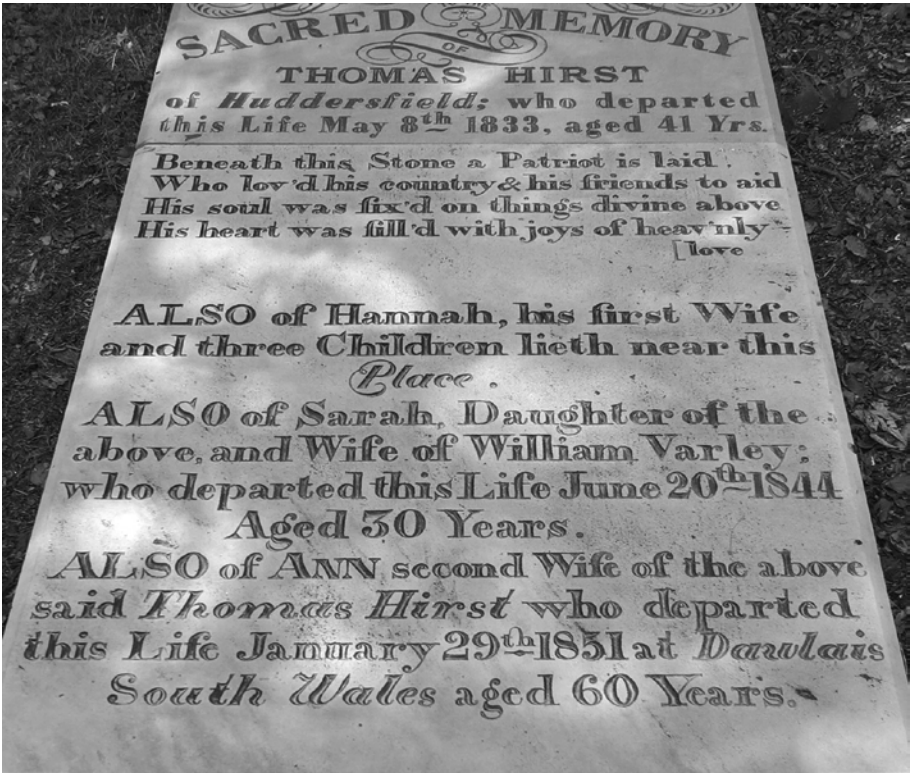
between 11 June and 20 August 1831, see Royden Harrison, Gillian B. Woolven, Robert Duncan, *The Warwick Guide to British Labour Periodicals 1790-1970*, Harvester Press, Hassocks, 1977, p. 275.

[9] *Poor Man's Guardian*, 17 September 1831, 4 & 5. *Leeds Patriot and Yorkshire Advertiser*, 3 September 1831, p. 3.

[10] *Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator*, 3 September 1831.

[11] *Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator*, Iss. 2.

[12] *Leeds Patriot and Yorkshire Advertiser*, 14 April 1832, p. 2.


SACRED MEMORY
OF
THOMAS HIRST
of Huddersfield; who departed
this Life May 8th 1833, aged 41 Yrs.
Beneath this Stone a Patriot is laid
Who lov'd his country & his friends to aid
His soul was fix'd on things divine above
His heart was fill'd with joys of heav'nly
[love
ALSO of Hannah, his first Wife
and three Children lieth near this
Place.
ALSO of Sarah, Daughter of the
above, and Wife of William Varley;
who departed this Life June 20th 1844
Aged 30 Years.
ALSO of ANN second Wife of the above
said Thomas Hirst who departed
this Life January 29th 1851 at Dawlais
South Wales aged 60 Years.

Hirst's gravestone after restoration. Photograph: Author's own

He argued that the generality of newspapers were 'bribed by the rich to advocate their cause against [that] of the poor'. Their distress was not caused by machinery, but by its ill-direction. Monopoly and competition was the cause of distress. He wished to do away with the bickering and the ill-will which had so long subsisted between master and men. This object would be achieved by co-operative societies.[13]

Hirst was at the Congress with the Rev. C. B. Dunn, who was on a Committee tasked with the preparation of rules for the regulation of Co-operative Societies in Great Britain and Ireland. This was read by Dunn to the Congress meeting in a private session that appointed Hirst, among others, to accompany Robert Owen on the following day to the money market, where they would explore the raising of funds for co-operative ventures.[14] Hirst had become a considerable figure in national co-operative circles.

[13] *The Crisis*, 28 April 1832, pp. 1 & 4.
[14] *The Crisis*, 1 May 1832, p. 24.

He stayed on for some time in London after the Congress to take up speaking engagements, but domestic affliction caused him to cut it short and return home. He only stayed at home for three days, before setting off with Dunn to Sheffield, Loughborough, Leicester, back to Loughborough and then on to Lane End, Staffordshire. He was at Holmfirth in June, 'where he was met on the road by a multitude of people'. Then on to Silkstone, Runcorn, Bolton and Liverpool, often speaking in Methodist chapels. Hirst's lectures were sometimes delivered before hundreds and even thousands and on occasion involved considerable walking to keep expenses down.[15]

Huddersfield obtained its first seat in Parliament with the passage of the Reform Act in June 1832. Hirst was active in supporting the Radical candidate for Huddersfield at its first general election, proposing cheers to Captain Joseph Wood and his friend and companion, Major-General Johnson, on the occasion of a visit to the town to pay their respects to the electors. He included three cheers 'for Mr Oastler, the friend of the poor, and the friend of the factory children' in his proposal, demonstrating his support, alongside other members of the Political Union, for the Ten Hours Movement.[16] And the day before, at a Sunday evening meeting on Back Green, he delivered a funeral sermon on Proverbs, 'the righteous is more excellent than his neighbours', for Thomas Roberts, late President of the Trades Union, who had died in Leeds of cholera. At least 20,000 were reported as present, attending in large parties drawn from places in the surrounding district.[17]

But Hirst was not to survive himself for long into the following year. He was ill in April, as preparations were being made to hold the Co-operative Congress in Huddersfield, and died on 8 May. before his internment at Holy Trinity Church on the 12th. The funeral was attended by thousands.[18] The church's 1,500 seats would have been completely taken. The tombstone was inscribed:

> Beneath this Stone a Patriot is Laid Who loved his country and his friends to aid,
>
> His soul was fixed on things divine above,
>
> His heart was fill'd with joys of heavenly Love.

[15] *Lancashire and Yorkshire Co-operator*, July 1832.
[16] *Leeds Intelligencer*, 9 August 1832; *Leeds Patriot and Yorkshire Advertiser*, 11 August 1832, p. 3.
[17] *Leeds Patriot and Yorkshire Advertiser*, 11 August 1832, p. 3; *York Herald*, 11 August 1832, p. 2.
[18] For a more detailed account of the funeral and Hirst's career see Alan Brooke's website: https://undergroundhistories.wordpress.com/tag/thomas-hirst/ . Also see Thornes' 'Origins of the Co-operative Movement in Huddersfield', in Haigh, *Huddersfield*, 1992.

**The Restoration of Hirst's Gravestone**

Alan Brooke discovered the damaged gravestone covering Hirst's grave some time during 2005. He took a picture of the discovery, shared the photograph with me and asked if I knew of anyone who could help in a collective effort to do something to restore the damage. As I was active in the Co-operative Party, I put the problem to John Drewery, secretary to the Yorkshire Regional Council of the Party, but from Huddersfield. John and other Huddersfield members of the Regional Council were keen to assist. Pat Thorpe, a Huddersfield Co-operative Party branch delegate to the Regional Council, and her husband, David, a fellow party member, visited Holy Trinity and learned from discussion that permission for restoration would have to be obtained from the diocese. It was eventually established that application to the diocese for faculty would have to come from a surviving relative. We were not sure at this stage, January 2013, that one could be found.

Alan provided the next vital clue. He drew my attention to the statement that 'the late Mr Thomas Hirst of Granby Street, grandfather to the present Mr Westwood Hirst, hosier, in Buxton Road, was one of the leading officials of [the Huddersfield Industrial Society]'. This was very helpful, but not quite correct. The 1911 census records were now available and it was possible there to identify Westwood, age 30, single, and a hosiery salesman operating on his own account, resident with his parents at 18 Norman Avenue. His father was John Westwood Hirst [1843-1915], son of John Sykes Hirst [1816-1888]. So John Sykes was Westwood's grandfather, not Thomas, as Balmforth mistakenly noted. What should have written is that Thomas Hirst was great-grandfather to Westwood Hirst.

Alan Brooke, with Hirst's gravestone, pre-restoration.

So far so good. The lineage from Thomas to Westwood firmly established, how to move forward? Progress was first made by obtaining a copy of the 1969 death certificate for Westwood Hirst. This showed that it was reported by Alan Hirst, a son, who lived at 14 Yew Park, Halifax Road, Brighouse. Barbara Jones, another Co-

operative Party member who took a helpful interest, visited the house and spoke to the residents. Unfortunately, there had been a number of changes to the title of the property since 1969 and no one knew how to contact any member of the Hirst family.

This is where we stood in August 2013, though Alan's website post of June about Hirst eventually made the third vital contribution to the solution of our problem. Laura J. Hirst, a student at Manchester University, found the website post and wrote to Alan in 2016. I was consequently able to meet Laura and her parents, Mr and Mrs Stuart Hirst, at the People's History Museum in Manchester in June. The family was keen on arranging a restoration. I provided details of the procedure for getting permission from the Diocesan office in Leeds and restoration was eventually achieved with enormous help from the co-operative movement. This involved John Drewery again, and a new Co-operative Group Board member, Marc Bicknell, an accountant from Rotherham, who facilitated the involvement of Co-operative Funeral Care. David Collingwood, the head of CFC, generously offered to organise and finance the restoration, which was led by Jared Barker.

The restored gravestone was rededicated by the Reverend Mike Wilkins at Holy Trinity on Wednesday, 26 September 2018. Cyril Pearce, as Chair of the Huddersfield Local History Society, was in charge of the proceedings. Andy Barber spoke about Holy Trinity at the time of Thomas's burial in 1833. David Griffiths and I spoke about Hirst's life, and Neil Rhodes, Chair of the Yorkshire Co-operative Party Regional Council, spoke about the contemporary relevance of co-operation. Refreshments were provided by Co-operative Funeral Society, Greenhead Branch. Unfortunately, principal actors were unable to be present. Alan Brooke was away from Huddersfield and, most sadly, unforeseen circumstances prevented attendance by members of the Hirst family. This account of their forebear is dedicated to them.

## PIECING TOGETHER THE STORY OF TWO BROTHERS

**Christine Piper**

Searching a variety of sources and piecing together the information gleaned has enabled me to tell the story of two brothers from Huddersfield, who emigrated to Canada and became well known for growing sweet peas. The two brothers in question were Sam and Ralph Crosland, born into a textile manufacturing family in Huddersfield and who emigrated to Canada in 1913. Over many years I have followed numerous leads and searched a variety of different official records, in order to build a picture of their lives and 'know' them better. This article is about that search.

Crosland Brothers Seeds Packets. Image: Author's own

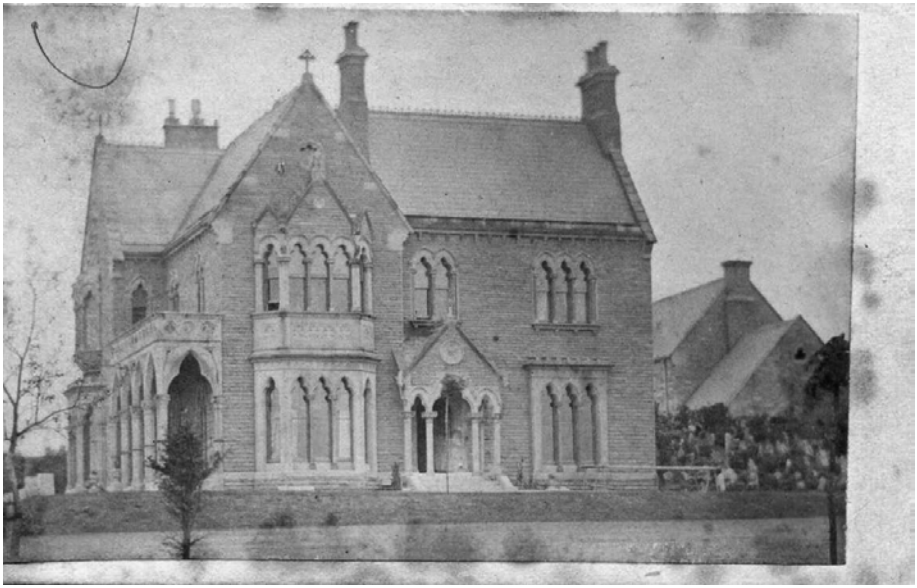
### A packet of seeds in the family greenhouse

I love sweet peas and I am sure the discovery of a packet of seeds, in the greenhouse at my parent's home, had something to do with this. I knew from an early age that 'some Crosland relatives' had harvested the seeds in Canada, but not much more. Later as my interest in family history grew I wanted to know more about the brothers, who produced the seeds, and in particular how they ended up living in British Columbia.

### Family Photos and albums

Initially, I spoke to family members and several friends of the family to see if they knew anything about the two brothers and their wider family and gleaned as much information as I could. Another fact-finding starting point included a visit to the

family grave in Edgerton Cemetery, Huddersfield. This provided the dates of birth and death for several of the family who had lived in Huddersfield but did not include any details of Sam and Ralph Crosland.



Royds Mount. This image is from the Crosland family album, which was taken to Canada in 1913. Image: Author's own.

**Gathering the facts from official sources such as birth, death and marriage records, census returns, land registry and trade directories**

The register for West Yorkshire, Church of England marriages and Banns (1813-1935), showed that James Crosland and Ann Bentley married on 29 June 1859, in St Peter's Church in Bradford and which is now Bradford Cathedral. Thomas Crosland, father of the groom and Nathan Bentley, father of the bride both signed the register.

I then gathered what information I could from census returns for Huddersfield, which were a useful source of information about the brothers' family, prior to them emigrating. In 1861 census the family were living in Hazel Grove, Huddersfield. By 1871, James and Ann had built a family home- Royds Mount, Luck Lane, Paddock. Together James and Ann had 9 children and my particular interest was to piece together the story of two of their eight sons, namely Samuel Woodhead (known as Sam) and Ralph Woodhead.

The census returns confirmed the family lived at Royds Mount, Luck Lane between the 1870s and 1890s and prospered. Looking at the census returns it was possible to

see how the family flourished and grew in the ten years from one census return to the next but also how the family prospered. Details were included about how many people James employed, how he was involved in public life and was an alderman. Between the 1891 and 1901 censuses, something occurred, as in 1901, the family were no longer living at Royds Mount. A search of the census return for Huddersfield in 1901, showed that they then lived at Church Street, Paddock; the census also revealed that James was now a coal merchant. Sam was working with his father and was also a coal merchant, and Ralph was employed at a wholesale clothier's. The Huddersfield trade directory confirmed that James had established himself as a coal merchant with his business based in Cloth Hall Street, Huddersfield.

In 1911 (Lower Hall, Kirkheaton; Huddersfield census), the brothers, Sam and Ralph appear to be still living with their parents, along with one other unmarried brother, Thomas who had been an 'invalid' from birth (b. 1876- d. 1919).

**Detailed descriptions of events reported in local newspapers, such as the Huddersfield Examiner**

In the process of discovering significant events that impacted on the Crosland family, the *Huddersfield Examiner* provided valuable information about a fire at the family mill in Paddock and a fatal accident at Sefton Mills in Meltham, which involved Sam and Ralph's eldest brother. Announcements of births, deaths including funerals, and marriages were often reported in papers and sometimes provided useful leads.

**Millgate Mill, Paddock, fire in 1888**

Sam and Ralph's family had continued to live at Royds Mount until 1899, but in 1888, there had been a fire at the family's mill. Although fire engines and other mill owners helped, the fire took hold and Millgate Mill was destroyed. Sixty mill men and 50 weavers were subsequently without work. The estimated damage was put between £10,000 and £12,000 which was only partly covered by the insurance. Looking through the newspapers of the time, fires were not uncommon and the financial consequences of the fire probably resulted in James being declared bankrupt in 1899.

**Ship Passenger Lists: UK, Incoming Passenger Lists (1878-1960) and UK, Outward Bound Passenger List (1890-1960)**

In 1912, James was in his 70s and in the March of 1912 his wife Ann, had died. Around this time plans put in place for James, Sam and Ralph, to emigrate to Canada. Ralph appears to have left for New York, from Liverpool on the 22 March 1913 aboard the ship S.S. 'Mauretania'. On the ship's passenger list James is named as

Ralph's father and living at Lanes End, Crosland Moor, and this was where James was living when he died. I believe this was a relatively new and temporary address as the business and home in Lower Lascelles had been sold in preparation for emigrating. Ralph's destination was recorded as Richlands, British Columbia and his profession was listed as clothier.

However, James was taken ill and had to cancel his planned departure on 10 May 1913 and died on the 18 April 1913. Sam later travelled to Canada, setting sail from Liverpool on the 6 June 1913, bound for Montreal, Quebec, Canada (UK, Outward Bound Passenger List 1890-1960) on the ship 'Virginiana' (Allan Shipping Line). On the passenger list it was recorded that his country of intended future permanent residence was Canada.

In the years following their emigration the brothers visited the UK. For example in November 1921, Samuel returned to England on the White Star Dominion Line which sailed from Montreal to Liverpool (UK, Incoming Passenger Lists 1878-1960) and returned via Halifax, Nova Scotia. I wonder if it was on one of these trips the packet of sweet peas that I have was brought over as a gift.

Later journeys undertaken by the brothers and recorded in ship passenger records include, Sam journey back to the UK on the White Star Dominion Line ship 'Canada' arriving in Liverpool on the 28 November 1921, from Montreal, Quebec, Canada. He appeared on the Ship's passenger list of British passengers. He was 56 years old and gave his occupation as 'seed grower' and his address in Huddersfield as The Holly, Marsh, Huddersfield (UK, Incoming Passenger list, 1878-1960)-this was the address of his sister Kate, who had married Edward Haigh in June 1887. In January 1922, Sam returned to Canada. He gave his UK address was Cloth Hall Street, Huddersfield and his profession Merchant (UK Outward Passenger Lists, 1890-1960). His brother Frank (1868-1931) was a cigar merchant with his business on Cloth Hall Street at this time.

**Maps**

Some of the places associated with the family were quite easy to find but looking at a map of the Lascelles Hall area really helped with understanding something which had puzzled me. The family had been made bankrupt in 1899 but their address varied between Lascelles Hall or Lower Hall, Lascelles- both of which sounded quite grand for a coal merchant. Looking at the OS Map for 1893 in the Huddersfield Reference Library showed that while there was a building called Lascelles Hall, the name also appeared to apply to the whole village. The Crosland family had actually lived at Lower Hall, Lascelles, in 1911 and on the map this refers to a cluster of over 20 dwellings and it is more likely they lived in one of these rather than the Hall itself.

**Obituaries in Newspapers:**

In James Crosland's obituary it stated that his coal merchant business had been sold and it had been his intention to emigrate to Canada to live with his sons, Samuel and Ralph and 'to assist these two sons in fruit growing and mixed farming'. However, this was not to be as James became unwell days before the date of his departure for Canada and died on 18 April 1913. It is possible that the original plan was for all three of them to sail to New York in March 1913, and Sam stayed behind to travel with James later, once he was recovered from his illness but he did not recover. James is remembered on the family grave in Huddersfield Cemetery. There is no evidence to suggest Thomas, one of the remaining unmarried sons, planned to go to Canada and he subsequently died aged 43, in October 1919 and is also memorialised on the family grave in Edgerton Cemetery.

Although Ralph and Sam returned to Britain over the years, they established a new life for themselves on Vancouver Island, in a small settlement called Somenos, near Duncan, on the southern end of the island. What I know about their life in Canada is gleaned from newspaper cuttings, a few letters from people who knew them and a letter Ralph wrote to his nephew in August 1959. Some of this information is reproduced below.

**Newspaper articles about the brothers in a Canadian Newspaper, *The Cowichan Leader***

The heading for one newspaper article was:

> **Crosland Brothers Cedar Creek Ranch - Prize Pigs** (*Cowichan Leader,* 1916) For the past three years the two Crosland Brothers have been raising pure bred Yorkshire pigs on their 15 acre farm at Somenos. Samuel W. the elder brother is an authority on pigs. They have a dozen brood sows, all registered pedigree stock. They have recently sold a prize boar to the Dominion Government Farm at Agissiz, B.C. As well as sows and sixty young ones the farm is devoted to poultry raising and growing sweet peas, for seed purpose on Green Road, Somenos. The Crosland Brother's sweet peas have not been duplicated.[1]

During the First World War pig production in Canada was increased so meat could to be shipped to Britain as part of wartime measures, and during this period Sam managed a pig farm for the Canadian Government. The Canadian Prairies, between Quebec and Ontario were the most popular pig rearing areas in Canada and

[1] *Cowichan Leader,* 1916.

Yorkshire pigs, with white erect ears, were the most numerous breed of pig in Canada, known for their vigour, prolificacy and efficient feeding conversion. The sows commonly produce 10 pigs per litter.[2] However, the Crosland Brothers were renowned for their sweet peas as much as their pigs, as the following article shows.

> **'Sweet Peas.... Eight blooms on one Stalk: Growing seeds near Duncan'** (*Cowichan Leader*, 2 August 1917) Travellers on the Esquimalt and Nanaimo Railway may have remarked about a mile north on Duncan some 2 acres of sweet peas growing on the west side of the track in a fertile bottom. This is a portion of Cedar Creek Ranch where Messers Crosland Brothers, famed for pedigree Yorkshire pigs, are growing sweet peas seeds for the British and Provincial markets. The bulk of the flowers have four blooms to the stalk. In the 'Leader' window there can be seen one stalk with eight blooms and two with six blooms each (picture of seed packets*).*

**Private correspondence with contacts in British Columbia**

In the 1980s, long before the internet, I wrote to a local historian in Duncan, BC and he was kind enough to do some searching on my behalf and put me in touch with Helen Frost who had worked for the brother. As she recounted:

> I knew the Crosland Brothers reasonably well, as I used to pick up vegetables for their farm for the store I worked for during the period from 1939 to 1942. We also sold their very fine sweet pea seeds. Ralph was very nice but Sam was rather domineering. However, speaking to several of their past employees in the past few weeks, I find that although very strict, they were very good to their workers.
>
> In the 1930s Duncan City used to hold a summer fiesta, called the Sweet Pea Festival that lasted for several days, in the early summer. I remember the streets were decorated with sweet pea blooms, many of which were donated by the Crosland Brothers.[3]
>
> They grew the sweet peas for pleasure first and the seeds were so large they sent a sample to England. A wire came back, 'quote on a ton', which of course they did not have. They hired many girls and rented another property to grow the sweet pea. They grew wholesale at first and then retail around 1920. Sam used to put a display of sweet pea blooms in the Hudson Bay Company windows, in Vancouver. This involved a boat trip and a three

[2] 'Pig farming', the Canadian Encyclopedia, retrieved from: https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/pig-farming on 12/04/2019.
[3] Extract from a letter written to me in 1989, from Jack Fleetwood, local historian in Duncan, B.C.



Ralph Crosland outside the house he had built in BC, circa 1956. Courtesy of Helen Frost

hour cart ride. By the time I worked for Ralph, competition was spoiling the business.

When I went to work for Ralph he was still walking a good distance to play bridge with a neighbour and would walk over two miles to see cricket played. Ralph had two holidays a year; every summer he went to Mapen Bay, a beach resort. He also liked to visit Victoria which was a 40-mile bus journey. Eventually he gave up the beach resort and went to Victoria twice a year instead.

Ralph had a modern house built in 1955. My [Helen's] cousin built it and my parents hired a firm to do all the remaining work on it. Three years before he died Ralph moved into a nursing home. He broke his hip and died in Duncan hospital shortly afterward.

**The Obituaries for Sam and Ralph in local newspaper in Canada.**

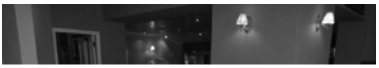
Sam died in October 1945 aged 80. He has a modest grave in the cemetery at St Mary's Church, Somenos. In his obituary, Sam was described as coming from a well-known Yorkshire family and settling in Cowichan 32 years previously and having resided there ever since, making the name of 'Crosland Brothers' internationally known as a seed growing firm. It was the first firm in Canada to grow sweet peas for

the commercial market. They had contracts with wholesale seed houses such as Sutton and Sons.

Ralph died on 12 August 1969 aged 70; he left six equal shares of his estate to his surviving nieces and nephews. In his obituary it was stated he and his brother had been known throughout Canada for their sweet peas.[4] Ralph was also an ardent sportsman and in his youth had played County Cricket in Yorkshire. He was one of the earliest members of the Cowichan Cricket Club. He was interred at St Mary's Anglican Churchyard Cemetery, Somenos.

**Sometimes a source of information appears totally out of the blue**

No one in the family had ever mentioned that Sam and Ralph had taken a family photograph album with them to Canada, so it was a total surprise when I received a phone call saying someone in Canada was looking for people who might be connected with a photograph album. Over 40 years after Ralph died, a British born Canadian called John Roberts, bought our album at an auction in Canada and set about reuniting it with any living descendants, of which I am one. John Robert was also kind enough to visit St Mary's Church in Somenos, to see if he could find a grave for Samuel and Ralph. John Roberts found Sam's grave but was unable to locate one for Ralph.



Christine with John Roberts looking over the Crosland's family album.

**Biography**

Christine Piper has been interested in family history research since an early age. She loves to spend time in the library seeking out information about her family members and meeting interesting and helpful people there.

## PITY THE VICTORIAN TEACHER

## Ros Whittaker

When, if ever, we think about Victorian schools, we tend to think about the pupils. How different from our own experience or that of children today their lives were. But what of the teacher? What was their working life like? It certainly seems easier than a teacher's life today in many ways. There were fewer subjects in the curriculum, so less preparation, less marking and definitely less paperwork. Discipline was strictly

[4] 20 August 1969 *Cowichan Leader.*

enforced. Children did not talk, they only spoke in answer to the teacher. They sat in rows, easily seen, so any infraction could be dealt with swiftly and firmly. Corporal punishment was not only allowed, it was encouraged – spare the rod, spoil the child. It does appear, therefore, that teachers had a much easier time then than now. The reality is, as usual, somewhat different from this stereotype. Although general in scope this article is based in part on the records of St Patrick's School, Huddersfield.

First the working environment. Anyone visiting a re-creation of a Victorian classroom such as the one at Tolson Museum or at Beamish will have been struck by how gloomy these are and this is not only because of the space in which these re-creations are located but because they actually were dark and gloomy. Windows were placed high in the walls to prevent the children being distracted by anything passing or from gazing dreamily out. A long pole with a hook was necessary to open the windows to allow some fresh air in, as those of us who attended school in a Victorian building or worked in one will remember. This limited the amount of light that could enter even on the sunniest day. This was exacerbated by the size of the classrooms which the re-creations rarely match. The rooms, particularly in urban schools, had to accommodate approximately 100 children. A description of St Patrick's school which opened in 1863, says that each of the 2 classrooms for the boys and girls were 53 feet by 24 feet by 18 feet high, while that for the Infants was 20 feet by 16 feet by 18 feet high.[5]

The next noticeable difference between a re-creation and the actuality would be the smell. There was no running water supply to houses at that time. Every drop of water, for drinking, cooking, washing, bathing and cleaning, was obtained from a communal pump and had to be stored somewhere in the home. To obtain hot water it was necessary to have a fire or stove on which to heat it and to be able to afford the fuel. In a series of articles published in 1849, Angus Bethune Reach investigated the condition of the working class in Huddersfield.[6] He described the town and its, mostly cottage, woollen industry, housing, wages and living conditions and interviewed several families who gave detailed accounts of their experience of living in extreme poverty. The town was owned by a single landlord, Sir John Ramsden and was not well built; back to back houses with either no 'necessary conveniences' (toilets) at all or where they do exist they are situated 'in positions perfectly destructive of anything like decent or seemly reserve' He estimated that the average rent for a house was 3/= (15p) per week, a third of the average wage, which meant that the majority of the working class could not afford to rent a house if they were dependant on one adult wage Coal cost one shilling and threepence (nearly 8p) per hundredweight in 1888, meaning that it would have been a luxury item for many working class families, to be

[5] *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 7 Feb 1863.
[6] *Morning Chronicle,* 3 December 1849 reprinted Angus Bethune Reach, *Fabrics, Filth and Fairy Tents*, Royd Press, Hebden Bridge, 1973, pp. 4-14.

used sparingly. From the many accounts available, literary and academic, bathing, if it occurred, was a weekly ritual, either in a tin bath or more likely at the sink. There are several entries in the school log books of children being reminded to wash their face and hands before coming to school, the implication being that they hadn't washed any other part of their body either. Washing clothes was a gruelling task, carrying the water, heating it, washing and wringing clothes by hand, using soap and then having somewhere available to dry it. Not surprisingly people smelt.

To add to the smell of the children, the room was lit by gas and heated by a coal fire. The description of the school quoted above also mentions the many gas brackets installed in the classrooms and these would obviously have been needed. There are entries in the school log books of the need to re-arrange certain lessons due to the poor light. In 1866, a new stove was installed which would have been much safer if no less smelly and could cause problems. In October 1873 the entry records that 'the stove being lighted for the first time the children were obliged to remove to the Girls school owing to the smoke.'

It was not just the classroom or the children that smelt. Huddersfield may have been 'a most handsome town' but like all towns at that time it was dirty, smelly and noisy. There was no sanitation system. Toilets, usually communal, consisted of a board with a hole, possibly over ashes and were emptied by night soil men. The main means of transport was still by horse, meaning that roads were littered with manure. A report of 1850 complains of the way in which manure, public and private is being carted through the town at all hours of the day. Factories, mills and houses used coal which emitted soot and smoke and smelt. The roads that existed were either cobbled or macadamised so the noise of horse's hooves and wheels on vehicles would have been evident and trams, although still a relatively new form of transport, ran in the town adding to the pollution and noise. The noise from the many street hawkers shouting their wares would have also added to the general hubbub. The Thackray museum in Leeds has re-created a small section of Victorian Leeds including dim light, smells and noise giving a more authentic experience.

It was in these conditions that the teacher lived and worked. The majority of teachers were female and, at St Patrick's, were all female from 1869. Female teachers were cheaper. Teacher's pay varied depending on the type of school in which they worked. Board schools, which were run by the Education Department and the schools run by the different religious denominations, Church of England, Nonconformist or Catholic, all paid different rates. Yet figures by the Education Department, show that female teachers were consistently paid at least 50% less than male teachers in the same type of school. According to these figures the teachers at St Patrick's would have received £57/5/2d per year, a little over £1 per week. This compares well with the earnings quoted previously, especially if the teacher was still living with her family or was a

nun, living in a convent, as some of the teachers of St Patrick's were from 1884.

Education became compulsory to the age of 10 as a result of the 1870 Education Act. Children were segregated by gender at the age of 7, girls were educated in the classroom known as the Girls school with its separate entrance, playground and 'out offices' - toilets, and the boys in a similar classroom known as the Boys school. Infants had their own classroom but shared facilities with the girls. There was one teacher for each school, responsible for teaching all the children irrespective of their ages or abilities. To do this a system of monitors, Pupil Teachers and Assistant Teachers was developed. Each school was in the charge of a Certificated Teacher whose classification was based on the length of their training; thus, 1st class equalled one year's training while 3rd class equalled 3 years. The teacher might be assisted by a monitor or monitress or a pupil teacher. A monitor or monitress was a child who had reached the school leaving age, 10 at this time. They would be given instruction by the teacher the day before to enable them to take the lesson. A pupil teacher had to be aged 13 or over, of good moral character and physical health; each of which had to be proved annually, the first by a letter from the manager testifying to her/ his character, the second by a medical certificate. The teacher was responsible for training the pupil teacher for at least 1½ hours per day, 5 days per week, before or after school for which they received an extra payment. The pupil was inspected each year and after an apprenticeship of 5 years could apply to a teacher training college or become an Uncertificated or Assistant Teacher. Their rates of pay in Huddersfield were 3⁄10d per week in their 1st year; 4⁄9 ½ d per week in their 2nd year, 5⁄9d per week in their 3rd year, 6⁄8 ½ d in their 4th year and 7⁄8d in their final 5th year.[7]

The range of subjects that were taught changed as a result of Government directives and a system of payment for specific subjects. The log books show that in 1864 the curriculum included Reading, Dictation on paper, Writing from memory on paper, Letter writing and Singing. In 1866 it included Catechism, Arithmetic, Multiplication, Subtraction, Drawing – Freehand Model, Geography, Notation and Numeration and Mental Arithmetic. In 1869 Mechanical drawing and Spelling were mentioned. In 1875 the national standard was expanded to include Grammar, Geography, History and plain Needlework, for which an additional grant could be claimed.[8]

In 1893 the school leaving age was raised to 11 and by this time children were divided by age as well as by gender into different Standards. The log book of 1894 does give some detailed information about the curriculum and how it developed through this period including Schemes of Work for some of the subjects. Schemes of Work from 1893 which were approved by the School Manager, Canon Dolan and the HM

[7] *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 8 October.1853.
[8] D Gillard (2011) *Education in England: a brief history, Retrieved from* www.educationengland.org.uk/history on 12/04/2019.

Inspector give more detail about some of the subjects taught. Criticism, Handwriting, Recitation, Poetry, Musical Drill, Word Building. There is also a list of songs for the Junior classes – Raindrops, Summer Days, Merry Mountain Children, Come Come Come and Forests Echoes and for the Senior Classes – Forests Echoes, Warbling Waters, Voices of the Night, Whispering Hope and Home Again. Unfortunately, none of the lyrics have been preserved. The Geography Scheme included England, British Isles and Australasia and the Colonies and Dependencies. The Recitation Scheme included works by Shakespeare, Cowper and Longfellow. The younger children learnt the cautionary tale of Meddlesome Matty.

By 1894 the pupils were studying History and the Scheme of Work for 1894 shows that they were conducted on a whistle stop tour through English History. Each year group studied a particular era and the Scheme of Work lists the topics covered, but not the number of lessons devoted to each of these topics. The syllabus for Standard III contained 12 topics which began with the Ancient Britons through the Roman Conquest, Anglo Saxon forefathers, the Danish Conquest to the Norman Conquest. Standard IV covered 20 topics and concentrated on individuals, mainly kings but also some notable personages. It begins with Hereward the Wake and ends with Caxton and includes Joan of Arc. Standard V studied the Tudors from Henry VII to Queen Elizabeth concluding with dates of leading events and a chronological table. Standard VI studied the Stuarts, again concluding with a list of leading events.

Perhaps the most surprising Scheme is that for Conversation, also in the log book, which says 'The following are the List of Conversational Lessons prepared for the Examination Article 106'. The topics resemble the list of subjects included in the Science Scheme and include domestic animals such as the horse, cow, dog, cat, hen and sheep and more exotic animals such as the reindeer, lion and elephant; plants such as coffee, sugar, potato, apple and wheat; seasons, metals, a map, the shape of the Earth, concluding with a needle and a pin!

The Scheme for Science list the various topics to be covered by each of the Standards but, again, does not provide details of how these were to be studied. Standard II would cover Animals such as the horse, cow and dog etc, Birds, Plants – roots, stems, leaves etc; Metals – gold, silver, copper etc. Porous Bodies, The Formation of Rivers and Lakes and Sponge. Standard III studied, among other topics, Organic and Inorganic Bodies, Birds, Flowering Plants and Clouds. The similarity between the Science, Object and Conversation Schemes would support the interpretation that the system was still based on rote learning, with pupils reproducing the information either verbally and / or in writing.

Log Book entries from 1895 show that other subjects, Manual Occupation i.e. paper cutting for girls and paper colouring for boys; History, Grammar and Physical Exercises, were being introduced. There is no further explanation about the paper cutting and colouring, nor why it differentiated by gender, only that the children seemed very pleased with this new occupation. A list of supplies received in the same year included Science Readers, Arithmetic books, maps for object lessons and a chart for Drawing. The list also shows the number of pupils as 96 books were needed for each of Standard II and Standard III while the school still had only one Certificated teacher and 3 Assistant teachers. Yet the school received satisfactory annual reports from HM Inspectors. This would suggest that all the teachers had equal responsibility for teaching but the Head, the only Certificated teacher, was also responsible for admin, such as recording entries in the log book, training Pupil teachers and receiving visitors.

Teachers would have been at increased risk of contracting illnesses. Infant mortality rates were double that of the rest of the population. There were regular epidemics of illnesses, which the first Medical Officer of Health in Huddersfield, Dr Kaye described as the 7 'chief diseases' i.e. small pox, measles, scarlet fever, diphtheria, whooping cough, fever and diarrhoea. Diseases such as typhus, typhoid and continuing fever, all caused by lack of adequate sanitation, were also prevalent and there were also epidemics of influenza. The teacher, living in the same area and in daily, close contact with the children was at risk of contracting these same diseases and the log books show that many teachers left through ill- health. The other main reason for leaving was marriage as teachers were usually single women although, unusually, St Patrick's retained 3 teachers after their marriage.

So, who would choose to be a teacher? For a girl from a working class family in nineteenth century Huddersfield, leaving school at 10, with only a basic education, work opportunities would have been limited. and often casual and low paid. Men were always paid more than women, even for the same job. Office work was an exclusively male occupation until the turn of the century. Domestic service was the main occupation for women, including cleaners and laundry workers. There were mills and factories that employed girls from the age of 13, but this work fluctuated, dependant on markets and workers typically worked at least 10 hours a day, 6 days a week. Teaching was both better paid and offered stable employment.

Working life for a teacher was hard but then life was hard for all working-class people. They had secure employment, provided they stayed healthy and, for women, single. They were comparatively well paid, and it was a respectable profession at a time when respectability was very important and, this respect was accorded to them, not just by the children, but the parents and wider community, not always the case today. Perhaps my sympathy would be unappreciated and unwelcome.

**Biography**

Ros is a retired teacher and member of the Huddersfield Local History Society. Her research into the history of St Patrick's and St Joseph's Schools in Huddersfield has in part been inspired by her interest in the history of the Irish community.

# SAMUEL SHARPE AND PETER MACOWAN OF HUDDERSFIELD COLLEGE

## Myra D. Kavanagh

This article provides a brief biographical summary and comment on Samuel Sharpe and Peter MacOwan, Principal and Vice-Principal respectively, of the nineteenth century Huddersfield College, located in New North Road. Under the stewardship of such men, Huddersfield College educated and moulded many useful citizens.[1]

Before becoming Principal and Vice Principal, both Samuel Sharpe and Peter MacOwan had been in the employ of Woodhouse Grove School, a boarding school set up for the sons of Wesleyan ministers. A former pupil at the school recalled both men for a book on the school published in 1885. Prior to their arrival, in close succession, tensions had been high between the Governor and the then head-master and teaching standards had reached a low ebb.[2]

> […] Almost all I learned was in the two last years. [...] During those two years Dr. Sharpe was headmaster, and Peter M'Owen second. Sharpe said he was sharp by name and we should find him sharp by nature, and we did so. He and Peter worked hard to put the school in better form. Peter was not a learned man, and had always a Key and a Lexicon at hand, yet he had a rare quality of making us learn and think for ourselves. Our education had been sorely neglected, and he laboured to give us an insight into all knowledge. He made geography interesting with incident. He originated a Chemical Laboratory and Museum of Curiosities, and reformed the School Library. [...] M'Owen was a stern disciplinarian, and often caned me, explaining as he did so that he had a strong regard for my Father [...][3]

Despite the slightly doubtful appreciation of Peter MacOwan by his former pupil, it is clear that Mr MacOwan and Samuel Sharpe had a good working relationship. Their tutelage and co-operative abilities ensured that academic progress and character building were carried forward under their supervision.

Thus, when it was learned that Sharpe had applied to fill a senior vacancy at Huddersfield College (a young and progressive institute) the management Committee of Woodhouse Grove requested he withdraw his application. When he refused to do so, his agreement with the school was terminated and the Committee began seeking his successor. Peter MacOwan, then second master at Woodhouse

[1] Some of whom are listed in W.T. Pike (ed), *West Riding of Yorkshire Contemporary Biographies,* W. T. Pike & Co, Brighton, 1902.
[2] Josiah T. Slugg. *Woodhouse Grove School*, T. Woolmer, London, 1885 pp. 114-115.
[3] Slugg. *Woodhouse Grove School*, op. cit., p. 143.

Grove and runner up for the principalship three years earlier, took the opportunity to reapply for the post. He felt that he had served the school well in the interim. When, the position was awarded to John M. Raby, Mr MacOwan not having been given the opportunity of an interview, gave notice of his intention to quit.[4] Samuel Sharpe was successful in being appointed to Huddersfield College, and so it was that both men left Woodhouse Grove School for Huddersfield in 1857.[5] Mr Sharpe soon took command as Principal of Huddersfield College and Peter MacOwan again became his second.

Samuel Sharpe was born at Chesterfield on 21 July, 1824 and baptised on 13 September.[6] His father, Rev. William Sharpe (1788-1871) who entered the Wesleyan ministry in 1813, was relocated to Holmfirth in Yorkshire in the year of Samuel's birth.[7] Because of the regular changes of residence to which Wesleyan clergymen were subject, young master Sharpe did not grow up in Yorkshire. He frequently joked that because from earliest memory, he had been accustomed to move from place to place, he felt no small sense of unease when first he came to be grounded in Huddersfield.[8]

As a boy, Samuel Sharpe was sent to Kingswood School, near Bath, and from there to Wesley College, Sheffield—being first a pupil there and afterwards a teacher. Mr Sharpe was a Graduate of the London University, taking first his B.A. in 1849 and being conferred with an LL.B. in 1853. For a short time he operated a private school in Norwich before assuming the headship of Woodhouse Grove. Arriving at Huddersfield College after the midsummer recess in 1857, he would remain in office until Christmas 1876, when failing health obliged him to send in his resignation.[9] There were, at that time, thirty-five applicants ready to fill the prestigious vacancy, including amongst them, graduates of nearly every University in the United Kingdom.[10]

A native of Hull, the son of a Wesleyan minister from Scotland, Peter MacOwan's life has deservedly received honorary treatment elsewhere.[11] An applied chemist, a photographer at the cutting edge of that technology and, in time, a botanist of high

[4] Slugg, *Woodhouse Grove School,* pp. 117-118.
[5] Frank C. Pritchard. *The Story of Woodhouse Grove School,* Woodhouse Grove*,* 1978, pp. 152-53.
[6] 'Death of Mr. Sharpe', *The Huddersfield College Magazine*, vol. v., J. E. Wheatley & Co., New Street, Huddersfield, 1877, pp. 229-233.
[7] Born at Gillingham, Kent to Thomas and Frances, on 16 May 1788; Slugg. *Woodhouse Grove School*, p. 116.
[8] 'Death of Mr. Sharpe', *The Huddersfield College Magazine*, vol. v., 1877, p. 229.
[9] 'Death of Mr. Sharpe'.
[10] 'The New Principal' *The Huddersfield College Magazine*, vol. v., p. 145; *The Huddersfield Chronicle*, 3 March 1877, p. 8.
[11] MacOwan - S2A3 *Biographical Database of Southern African Science* Retrieved from: www.s2a3.org.za/bio/Biograph_final.php?serial=1801 on 22/06/2018.

renown, he lived a productive and inspiring life. He and his grandson, Sir Basil Schonland, have made a significant contribution in the field of science. After 1861, Peter MacOwan would make his home in South Africa, hoping to improve a lung condition from which he suffered periodically. In South Africa, in 1887, plant pathology would gain recognition as a formal science, thanks to his appointment as consultant in economic botany to the Cape Government. Following his death, in late 1909, a fine obituary penned by his son-in-law, Selmar Schonland, was published in the bulletin of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, one of many important institutions with which his name had come to be associated. [12]

The reputation of Huddersfield College was gaining ground under the now established stewardship of Samuel Sharpe. By the time of Peter MacOwan's departure, the College was already assuming the prosperity and defining characteristics which distinguish it for the following twenty years. The period of College history with which the name of Samuel Sharpe is associated proved progressively prosperous and uniformly peaceful. Mr Sharpe began his work by introducing new academic textbooks such as *Driver's Questions and Exercises in Arithmetic*.[13] William John [Clarke] Miller, mathematician and champion chess player, came to assume the role of Vice-Principal. [14]

The success of the school can be seen in the advertisements below:

> HUDDERSFIELD COLLEGE.— Established 1838. Affiliated to the University of London 1844. The PRINCIPAL receives FORTY PUPILS into residence at the College on moderate terms. The course of instruction secures a thorough commercial education, as well as preparation for the Universities. Many of the pupils have distinguished themselves at the Oxford and Cambridge University Local Examinations, and at the Matriculation Examination of the University of London. The Prospectus, with Report for the year ending Midsummer, 1862, will be forwarded on application to the Secretary, Mr. R. D. Gooch, 8, New Street, Huddersfield; or to SAMUEL SHARPE, LL.B., Principal.[15]
>
> HUDDERSFIELD COLLEGE.—Seventeen students from this College passed the recent Cambridge University Local Examinations. Of these, twelve obtained honours and some of them were especially distinguished in Religious

[12] See 'Miscellaneous Notes', Bulletin of Miscellaneous Information, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, vol. 3, 1910, pp. 84–100.
[13] Richard C. Driver, See 'Testimonials', The Preceptor's Manual of questions and exercises in arithmetic, for collective teaching or for the examination of classes, Groombridge and Sons, London, 1858, p. 128.
[14] Stephen Mann, 'William John Clarke Miller', Yorkshire Chess History, Retreived from: https://mannchess.org.uk/People/Miller,%20William%20John%20Clarke.htm on 12/04/2019
[15] Leeds Intelligencer, Saturday, 21 June, 1862. p. 1

> Knowledge, English, Latin, French, and Drawing, one having obtained the first place In French amongst the Juniors, and another the first place English subjects amongst tire Seniors […][16]

In October 1872, Huddersfield College had commenced production of an in-house magazine, covering sporting activities, school trips, and other school-related activities. Mr Sharpe was highly supportive of this venture.[17] There were serialized stories, mathematical problems posed and chess games evaluated. Vice-Principal, William John [Clarke] Miller, became the magazine's first full-time editor. It is possible to examine Mr Sharpe's contribution to the school, trace its conclusion and evaluate its significance through the pages of the Huddersfield College Magazine.[18]

In terms of his private life, Mr Sharpe was twice married. His first wife was Catharine who died in 1871. She was four years his senior, a native of Leeds. In addition to their surviving children, Catharine and Samuel Sharpe had a still-born son in 1861 and their little daughter, Frances Ada, died at Marlybone, London in 1864, at five years of age.[19] Mr Sharpe's second marriage took place in 1875, not long before his death. His second bride was Mary Elizabeth Dickin, second daughter of the late Rev. Thomas Dickin.[20]

Samuel Sharpe, ex-Principal of Huddersfield College, died at his residence on Saturday, 19 May 1877 following an illness extending over more than a year and a half. His death, attributed to 'heart disease', caused, at the end, 'great physical prostration and restlessness very hard to bear'.[21] He was fifty-two years old.[22] The arrangements made at the College for his funeral, after so prolonged an absence through illness, are indicative of the esteem in which he was held. Though the funeral was intended to be strictly private, the family acceded to the desire of a number of the masters, pupils, and old scholars, to be present and pay their respects.

On Wednesday morning, 23 May 1877, the College Council, Directors, teachers, pupils, friends and members of the Wesleyan denomination, met in the college-hall. The Rev. Robert Bruce, of Highfield, Honorary Secretary to the College, the Rev. George Charter, Wesleyan minister, Queen Street, the Rev. R. Harding, of Buxton Road and the Rev. Dr. Fraser of Bradford (who had temporarily replaced Dr. Sharpe

[16] *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, Yorkshire, 19 June 1869
[17] 'Old College Boys' Dinner', *Huddersfield College Magazine*, vol. v., p. 233
[18] *The Huddersfield College Magazine*, vol. v.
[19] *The Huddersfield Chronicle*, 4 May 1861: 'May 2nd, at the College, Mrs. Samuel Sharpe, of a son, still-born.'
[20] *Bradford Observer*, 7 Jan 1875
[21] See 'Death of Mr. Sharpe'
[22] *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 24 May 1877, p. 3.

as Principal, during his illness) took part in a short service.[23] Mr Sharpe was eulogised for his regularity and conscientiousness, patient toil and wise methods which, aside from his scholarship, had assured the success of his tenure.[24]

The Rev. Mr. Bruce, in particular, read a paper referring to the deceased, and made reference to a letter which the late principal had written to the students when he had thought himself near death, some months before. After the service, the funeral cortege was formed and the body of the former Master was accompanied to the grave by approximately one hundred pupils, a large number of old college boys, college masters, and friends.[25] Mr Sharpe was also survived by his mother, who was remembered with affection by many of the former College House boarders.[26] The Church of England burial service, at Huddersfield Cemetery, was read by the Rev. W. B. Calvert, M.A., Vicar of Huddersfield.[27] However, Samuel Sharpe had retained his connection with Wesleyan Methodism to the last. For nine years prior to his death he had filled the offices of circuit steward and chapel trustee. A Subscription raised as a testimonial to him was continued for the benefit of his widow and daughters who received in excess of £300.[28]

**Biography**

Myra Kavanagh has a long standing interest in local history. She studied local history at Maynooth University and holds an Advanced Diploma in Local History from the University of Cambridge. She has contributed to a number of Cork periodicals including the Mallow Field Club Journal.

[23] *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 24 May 1877, p. 3; See 'Death of Mr. Sharpe'
[24] Slugg, *Woodhouse Grove School,* pp. 116-117
[25] Slugg. *Woodhouse Grove School*, pp. 116-117
[26] See 'Death of Mr. Sharpe'
[27] *Huddersfield Chronicle*, 24 May 1877, p. 3
[28] See 'List of Subscribers', *Huddersfield College Magazine*, vol. v., pp. 342-43

# CYPRUS A FORGOTTEN WAR

## Les Smith

If you ask anyone what they know about Cyprus. most will reply that it is a small holiday island in the Mediterranean. Few may say that there was a problem in the 1970s when the Turkish army invaded and partitioned the northern part of the island. It is doubtful if many will know that Cyprus was part of The British Empire under military occupation 1914 to 1925 and then a Crown Colony until 1960.

The United Kingdom had promised Greece unification with Cyprus if Greece would enter the First World War on the side of the Allies; but the Greeks declined this invitation because King Constantine I of Greece had been educated in Germany, was married to Sophia of Prussia, sister of Kaiser Wilhelm, and was convinced of the Central Powers' victory. Prime minister Eleftherios Venizelos on the other hand was an ardent anglophile and believed in an Allied victory. After Venizelos' efforts to sway Constantine's opinion proved unsuccessful, the promise was never realised.

Although there had been problems most of the time with the Greek Cypriots, who were in the majority over the Turkish Cypriots wanting unity with Greece. This came to a head when the National Organisation of Cypriot Fighters, known as EOKA began a violent terrorist campaign against British rule in the colony after a long dispute between Turkey and Greece over the future of Cyprus. On 1 April 1935 the British Government declared a state of emergency that was to last until 18 April 1959.

More than 22,000 British servicemen were in Cyprus during its conflict between 1955 and 1959 but very few people know that in that time we lost a total of 371 young soldiers, mostly National Servicemen and 21 British policemen.

I write this as a Cyprus Veteran who served in the Royal Horse Guards 1957 to 1959. Since November 2015, I have been searching for the relatives of the 371 men who died in Cyprus to let them know that their loved ones have not been forgotten by their comrades and that now there are two Memorials dedicated to them. One a large one in the Old British Cemetery, Kyrenia, Cyprus and a smaller one in the National Memorial Arboretum, Alrewas, Staffordshire, both paid for by donations.

The Memorial in the Arboretum is thanks to one man. David Littlemore who served in Cyprus in The Royal Military Police. David arranged for the RAF to bring, by sea, a large rock from the mountains of Cyprus. The rock was prepared by the same stonemason who was responsible for the Kyrenia Monument. ‘The Rock’ had a hole drilled into it and a copper cylinder with the names of the 371 and 21 policemen placed inside. Over 500 people attended the dedication of ‘The Rock’ as it is now

known, most being Cyprus Veterans and quite a number of families of the 371 who died in Cyprus. There is to be a Service of Remembrance each year on the Sunday preceding the 20 August.

Another reason for starting his project of searching for the families of his fallen comrades is to let them know that since the year 2009 a new award the Elizabeth Cross is available to be presented to the next of kin of anyone who died on active service. The award is backdated to take into account those who died in Cyprus. Up to the beginning of July 2018 I have managed to trace the families of 172 servicemen. Most have now received The Elizabeth Cross and Scroll or are awaiting presentation. When the Elizabeth Cross is presented this usually happens at the local County or Town Hall or Army Barracks by the Lord Lieutenant or his deputy along with officers and men from the Regiment of the person to be honoured.

At least 27 men from Yorkshire died during the conflict. I have managed to trace 13 families so far but is still searching for the family of a man who lived in Huddersfield:

Craftsman Brian SHAW is one of the 372 British Servicemen who died on active service during the four-year Cyprus Emergency 1 April 1955 to 18 April 1959, and whose name is among those remembered with honour on the British Cyprus Memorial. Serving with the REME he died at Gastria on 18 July 1958. Aged 19 from Huddersfield he is buried at Wayne's Keep, the British military cemetery in Cyprus, Plot 25 Row A Grave 14. Brian served attached to the Royal Horse Guards regiment repairing and maintaining armoured cars. It is believed he was out recovering an armoured car when he died. Brian attended Deighton School, Huddersfield.

I would like to hear from anyone who had a relative who died in Cyprus 1955 to 1959, or from anyone who served there in those years.

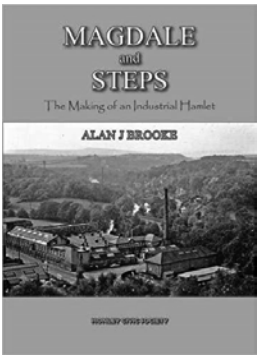
Please contact:

Les Smith **cyprusveterans@gmail.com**

## BOOK REVIEWS

Alan J. Brooke, *Magdale and Steps: The Making of an Industrial Hamlet*, Honley Civic Society, Honley, 2018. 88 pages. £10 paperback.

### Christine Verguson




Previously published privately in 2008, Honley Civic Society should be congratulated on making an extended edition of this very local history available to a larger audience. The new edition is also lavishly illustrated with photographs from both the Society's and author's own archives. It also has to be said that this is a labour of love, the author's family having lived in Magdale for over 200 years.

While histories of villages, hamlets and other small communities are to be welcomed, it is frequently the case that the roles played by local land and factory owners, and other dignitaries, is uncontested. Those who have heard HLHS member Alan Brooke's talks, or are familiar with his writings, will know that this is unlikely to be the case here and his nuanced approach in portraying such figures is to be welcomed. Take, for example, silk dyer G W Oldham who in 1907 was presented with a silver rose bowl by his workers but, just a few years later, these same workers came out on strike. Instances like this occurred all over the Huddersfield district, even when employers and employees lived in close proximity as they did in Magdale.

Yet the strength of this book is to be found in the vast array of people whose lives are portrayed, including millworkers and agricultural labourers. The author points out that only a few 'left any record', but it should be said that, as a result of his meticulous research and close reading of the documentary evidence, the reader is provided with a several life histories and a detailed picture of their world which is also rooted in its landscape.

Understandably the book is arranged chronologically and is divided into 12 sections while literary references to Magdale found in local newspapers have been included as an Appendix, and are definitely worth reading. Given the number of people and locations that are described, perhaps the map showing Magdale and Steps in c1850 should have been included at the beginning rather than at the end of the book, and a table of contents would also have been useful, but this small criticism only arises because of the wealth of material presented here.

Brooke begins by defining not only the geographical location of his study which otherwise might not be clear to today's reader given the extent to which places such as Magdale and Steps have been absorbed into Honley, if not into the greater Huddersfield district. While reference is made to the origins of the community as reflected in archaeological finds and place names, Brooke argues that the catalyst for its subsequent development was the fulling mill at Steps: 'Steps Mill was to evolve into a large scale enterprise employing hundreds of workers in all stages of woollen manufacture. The story of how this transformation affected the community is central to the history of Magdale'.[29]

It is sometimes the case that local histories, while tracing the growth of a settlement and the history of particular buildings tend not to look beyond their locality but, as Brooke shows, in the 1830s and 1840s the people of Magdale and Steps were very much caught up in national events following the 1826 financial crash. While some Magdalers were involved in the campaigns for the Ten Hours Bill and for the People's Charter, Steps Mill was one of those closed during the Plug Plot strikes of 1842. But this is also a time when we can begin to picture the inhabitants of Magdale. An 1829 painting, showing Upper Steps Mill, although with some artist licence, is described in some detail but it also includes two figures leading the author to exclaim, 'our first glimpse of Magdalers!'.[30] The daily routines in Beaumont and Vickerman's mill at Steps can be seen in their responses to the Factory Commissioners in 1833 and quoted here. But this is very much the story of industrial change, both in terms of Magdale's workshops and factories and also in terms of occupations. Brooke's exploration of the decline of handloom weaving is particularly revealing.

There was much more to life in Magdale than work. Mill treats and jubilee celebrations are described as is the Grove Inn and its association with hare hunting which at the time was a 'popular working class recreation' but we should not be surprised that several pages are given over to local naturalists - Alan Brooke's essay on the origins of the Huddersfield Naturalists Society was awarded the Yorkshire History Prize in 2010. Employer Alfred Beaumont of Parkton Grove house amassed a vast collection of bird and insect specimens while his night watchman was one of the founders of Honley Naturalists Society.

Bridges and roads, schooling, crime, tragic accents, natural events, changes in agriculture, transport, politics and privies are all included and much more. Brooke's account really ends with the First World War although an interesting 'Short Sequel' is included, based to an extent on family memories which takes the story further. He suggests that 'pre-war Magdale lived on as long as the individuals and institutions of

[29] Brooke, *Magdale and Steps*, p. 7
[30] Brooke, *Magdale and Steps*, p.19

that era survived'.[31] Although Magdale is still picturesque, Brooke concludes that, 'along with the textile industry a whole culture, language and way of life has disappeared' and suggests that life in Magdale in the 1960s was more like the 1860s than it is today. This lost world is echoed in the book's many illustrations.

While the book's structure was not always apparent to this reader, Alan Brooke provides a detailed and empathetic account of the 'making' of one Holme Valley community which should be of interest to anyone in the Huddersfield district who is considering how their own community may have developed.

[31] Brooke, *Magdale and Steps*, p. 75

## OBITUARIES

## Dr George Redmonds (7th December 1935 – 10th August 2018)

With the death of George Redmonds local history has lost a great scholar and the many local history societies and family history groups across the world a great friend and champion. Arguably, along with his good friends Prof. Stanley Ellis and Dr David Hey, he helped validate the study of Yorkshire's local history, its dialect, family names and place names as important subjects of scholarly research.

Over a period of almost fifty years, he produced significant work on the local history of the West Riding but also *Surnames and Genealogy: A New Approach* (1997), *Names and History* (2004), *Christian Names in Local and Family History* (2004) and, along with David Hey and Turi King, Surnames, *DNA and Family History* (2011). His 2015 *Dictionary of Yorkshire Surnames* is already hailed as a classic and his *Yorkshire Historic Dictionary* is due to be published next year.

He was a skilful communicator and his 2001 BBC Radio 4 series *Surnames, Genes and Genealogy* broke new ground. With Jennifer Stead and Cyril Pearce, he edited the local history magazine, *Old West Riding*. He also lectured extensively to local history societies and to family historians throughout Britain and in the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. His name on the programme was always a guarantee that every seat would be filled.

He will be sorely missed.

Cyril Pearce

## Hilary Haigh (1945 – 2018)

Hilary was born Elizabeth A. Hilary Turner in 1945, grew up in Honley and attended what was then Holme Valley Grammar School, now Honley High. After A levels she went to the University of Leeds before training first as a librarian in Aberystwyth then as an archivist at the University of Liverpool. She married John Haigh in 1978 and their daughter Sarah was born in 1981.

Her professional career began in 1968 as Huddersfield's Archivist and Local History Librarian, a post which she held when the borough was absorbed into Kirklees and retained under the new authority. Having left Kirklees in 1982 she spent some time as a freelance researcher and adult education tutor until 1991 when she was appointed Archivist at the University of Huddersfield, then the Polytechnic. She remained there until retirement in 2010, after which she was appointed Visiting Research Fellow.

Over the years, as Archivist, both for the local authority and for the University, she supported the work of countless people, some to higher degrees and others, bitten by the local history bug, simply to a better understanding of their home area. She has been a major contributor to the publication of books and journals on the history of Huddersfield and district. In 1992 she edited the now classic collection of essays *Huddersfield, a Most Handsome Town*, drawing on the work of more than twenty scholars. A painstaking and patient editor she worked closely with John Hargreaves on his *Slavery in Yorkshire*, marking the life and times of Richard Oastler, Huddersfield's nineteenth century factory reformer. More recently, published only shortly before she died, she wrote, edited and secured Heritage Lottery Funding for *A Parish at War*, a study of life in her adopted home of Netherton and Middlestown, near Wakefield, during the first world war – a splendid epitaph to every aspect of her work.

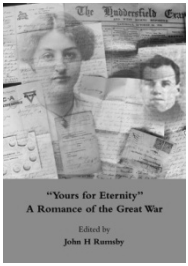
Alongside all of this, and after John's untimely death, Hilary has played a key role in the Huddersfield Local History Society (HLHS). She was one of the handful of people who came together almost forty years ago fired by the idea that it was about time Huddersfield had an organisation which shared and celebrated the history of the town and its area. From those modest beginnings in the late 1970s HLHS can now boast more than two hundred members, a substantial catalogue of publications and its own Journal. In all of this, most recently as Secretary, Hilary has played a quiet and unassuming but important part. Her final achievement in which she was unable to share was a successful HLHS study day, for which she had done most of the organising, which celebrated the centenary of the success of the campaign for votes for women.

Hilary has been one of the unsung heroes of much of what makes the study of local history in our own area so rich and vibrant. She will be sadly missed.

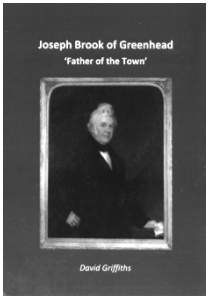
Cyril Pearce

***"Yours for Eternity" A Romance of the Great War***
Edited by John H Rumsby
(ISBN 978 0 9509134 9 0)

£5.00 plus postage and packing




---



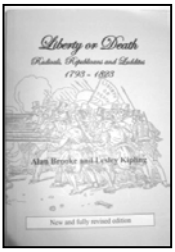

***Joseph Brook of Greenhead 'Father of the Town'***
By David Griffiths
(ISBN 978 0 9509134 8 3)

£6.00 plus postage and packing

---

***Liberty or Death: Radicals, Republicans and Luddites, 1793-1823***
By Alan Brooke and Lesley Kipling
(ISBN 978 0 9509134 7 6)

£8.00 plus postage and packing


Liberty or Death
Radicals, Republicans and Luddites
1793 - 1823
Alan Brooke and Lesley Kipling
New and fully revised edition

---

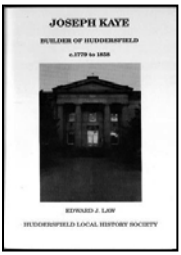
***Huddersfield in the 1820s***
By Edward J Law
(ISBN 978 0 950913 4 5 2)

£6.00 plus postage and packing

***Pioneers or Partisans?***
***Governing Huddersfield, 1820-48***
By David Griffiths
(ISBN 978 0 9509134 4 5)

£5.00 plus postage and packing

---

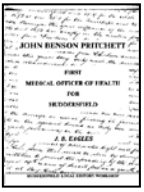



***Joseph Kaye,***
***Builder of Huddersfield, c. 1779-1858***
By Edward J Law
(ISBN 0 9509134 1 3)

£2.50 plus postage and packing

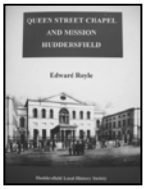
---

***John Benson Pritchett:***
***First Medical Officer of Health for Huddersfield***
By J B Eagles
(ISBN 0 95091350 5)




£1.50 plus postage and packing

---




***Queen Street Chapel***
***and Mission Huddersfield***
By Edward Royle
(ISBN 0 9509134 2 1)

£4.00 plus postage and packing

---

***All the above are available from HLHS, 24 Sunnybank Rd, Huddersfield, HD3 3DE, with a cheque payable to Huddersfield Local History Society, or via our website, www.huddersfieldhistory.org.uk, with secure on-line payment by PayPal. PLEASE ADD POSTAGE AND PACKING AS FOLLOWS: £1.50 for one item, £2.25 for two items, £3.00 for three or more items.***
***Look out for the Society's bookstall, at our meetings and other local events, which also carries a wide range of local history materials from other publishers.***

# HUDDERSFIELD LOCAL HISTORY SOCIETY

**WEBSITE:** www.huddersfieldhistory.org.uk
**EMAIL:** huddshistorysecretary@gmail.com
**TWITTER:** @HuddsLocalHist

## SOCIETY OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE

**Chair: CYRIL PEARCE**

Tel: 01484 655970

**Email: chairman@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk**

**Vice-Chair: BRIAN HAIGH**

Tel: 01484 430666

**Email: mail@brianhaigh1.plus.com**

**Acting Secretary: STEPHEN CHALLENGER**

**Email: huddshistorysecretary@gmail.com**

**Hon. Treasurer: DAVID GRIFFITHS**

Tel: 01484 540309

**Email: treasurer@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk**

**Publicity Officer: CHRISTINE VERGUSON**

Tel: 01484 321628

**Email: info@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk**

**Journal Editor: ROBERT PIGGOTT**

Tel: 07988 271779

**Email: editor@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk**

**Membership Secretary: VAL DAVIES**

21 Glebe Street, Marsh, Huddersfield
HD1 4NP; Tel: 01484 315772

**Email: membership@huddersfieldhistory.org.uk**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Maureen Mitchell, Bill Roberts,
Frank Grombir, Dave Pattern,
Janette Martin

**COMMUNICATION WITH MEMBERS**

The Society appreciates that not all members are computer users and will continue to send full information about members' events by post. The Society now circulates a regular e-newsletter by email which includes up-to-date information and details of events which may be of interest to members. If you would like to receive these email communications, please email your request to the Membership Secretary. Anybody joining the mailing list may leave at any time. You can also engage with the Society and get to know about our events and activities on Twitter by following @HuddsLocalHist and turning on Notifications.

ISSN 2049-8403
Price £4.00